

SEVERAL
ENQUIRIES,
CONCERNING

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| I. Justification. | VIII. The Unity of the Church or Body of Christ. |
| II. The Son of God; and what is <i>necessary</i> to be believed concerning him. | IX. Prayer. |
| III. Sinners Deliverance from Condemnation. | X. The Meaning of our Lord's Words, <i>Son, thy Sins be forgiven thee.</i> |
| IV. The Justice of God. | XI. The Meaning of our Lord's Words, <i>Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your Sins.</i> |
| V. Infinite Justice, and Infinite Satisfaction. | XII. Whether Christ is sole King in his own Kingdom, &c. |
| VI. Faith and Mysteries. | |
| VII. The Use of Reason in Matters of Revelation. | |

By THOMAS CHUBB, Author of
The Supremacy of the Father Asserted.

L O N D O N,

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ENQUIRIES

CONCERNING



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ENQUIRY
CONCERNING
JUSTIFICATION.



HIS Enquiry consists of two Parts ;
First, of Justification in general ; and
Secondly, of the Justification of a
Christian in particular.

First, of Justification in general :

I observe that as Justification is a
Law-term, so it imports (in the first
and most proper Sense) That Discharge or Act of
Acquitment which he that sits in Judgment pronoun-
ces upon the Person under Trial ; and therefore Justi-
fication presupposes several Things, (*viz.*) a Gover-
nour and Governed ; a Law or Rule that the Go-
vernèd is to act by ; and a Tribunal or Act of En-
quiry whether the Person governed has walked exact-
ly according to that Rule. And as

Justification is an Acquitting of the Person under
Trial, so that Acquitment is either an Act of Debr,
or of Grace. If when due Enquiry hath been made,

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the Person under Trial is found Innocent ; that is, hath acted exactly agreeably to the Rule which was given him, and by which he is tried ; then Justification is a Debt which the Judge is in strict Justice obliged to make good, and the Innocent Person may lawfully demand it as his Right. But if when Enquiry hath been made, the Person under Trial is found guilty ; that is, hath acted disagreeably to the Rule given him to walk by, then if he is acquitted, that Acquittal must be an Act of Grace, and not of Debt, because the Judge is so far from being obliged in Justice to acquit him, that on the contrary he might justly condemn him. His Transgression of the Rule justly exposes him to that Sentence of Condemnation, which is a proportionable Punishment to his Transgression ; and consequently if he is acquitted, it must be wholly of Grace, and not of Debt.

Secondly, of the Justification of a Christian :

I observe first, that as Justification is a two-fold Stream which flows from two different Fountains ; the one of Debt, flowing from the Innocency of the Person justified ; the other of Grace, flowing from the merciful Goodness of the Lawgiver : So the Justification of a Christian is wholly of the latter sort, (*viz.*) of Grace. The Christian hath no Right founded in Innocency to claim an Acquittal at God's Bar, because he is a Transgressor of God's Law ; and therefore his Acquittal is founded in the merciful Goodness of God the Lawgiver. For the Proof of this Observation, see *Rom. iii. 9, 23.* We have before proved, both *Jews and Gentiles*, that they are all under Sin. — *All have sinn'd, and come short of the Glory of God. Jam. iii. 2. In many Things we offend all. 1 Joh. i. 8, 10. If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive our selves, and the Truth is not in us. — If we say that we have not sinn'd, we make him a Liar, and his Word is not in us.* Here we see that all Christians are chargeable with Sin ; and consequently if they are acquitted

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acquitted at God's Bar, their Justification must be of Grace, and not of Debt. Moreover this is directly asserted by St. Paul, Rom. iii. 24. *Being justified freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ,* Eph. ii. 4, &c. But God, who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by Grace ye are saved.) — For by Grace ye are saved, thro' Faith; and that not of your selves; it is the Gift of God: not of Works, (or as a Debt) least any Man should boast. This is likewise farther prov'd from all those Texts wherein God is said to pardon and to forgive Sins, as in Matth. vi. 14. *If you forgive Men their Trespases, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you.* Eph. iv. 32. *Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* 1 Joh. i. 9. *If we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness.* Chap. ii. 12. *I have written unto you, little Children, because your Sins are forgiven you, for his Names sake.* From all which I think it is abundantly evident, that Christians have no Right founded in Innocency to claim an Acquittance at God's Bar, seeing they are Transgressors of his Law; but their Acquittance is founded wholly upon the merciful Goodness of God the Lawgiver, who gives them their Discharge wholly of his free Grace.

I observe *Secondly*, that as the Justification of a Christian is wholly of Grace, and not of Debt; so there is something pre-requisite which makes the Christian the suitable Object of this Favour of Justification, (*viz.*) Repentance, and Faith: Not that this Pre-requisite is a meritorious Cause of that Justification; for then it would be of Debt, and not of Grace; but only that it disposes him (in whom it is found) and makes him a suitable Object for this Grace to be exercised upon. By Repentance, I understand an awakening Sense of the evil Na-

ture, and the dreadful Consequences of Sin; a Conviction of our own Guilt, a deep Sorrow, Humiliation or Pain of Mind, that we have done amiss; a Confession of our Folly, and an actual forsaking it. By Faith I understand two Things: First, Faith in Christ; that is, a believing or being perswaded, upon rational grounds, that he is the true *Messiah*, the only-begotten, and the most-beloved Son of God; the anointed Lord and Saviour of Mankind; and that the glad Tidings which he published to the World are true, (*viz.*) That God is in and by him reconciling sinful Mankind to himself. Secondly, Faithfulness to him; that is, an honest Profession of his Name and Truth; an humble and dutiful Submission to his Kingdom and Government, a patient bearing of his Cross, and a persevering in Hope of the Heavenly Inheritance. For the Proof of this Observation, see *Luke* xiii. 3, 5. *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*, *Mar.* xvi. 16. *He that believeth not shall be damned*, *Joh.* viii. 24. *Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your Sins*. *Heb.* xii. 14. *Follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord*. In these Texts the foregoing Observation is prov'd Negatively, by proving that where Repentance and Faith are wanting, the Person which is destitute of them will be condemned, and consequently will not be justified.

Note, when I say, *where Faith is wanting*, I mean such a Want as arises from a refusing to assent when Christ hath been sufficiently reveal'd to the Person thus refusing; and not such a Want as arises from an Incapacity of assenting, because Christ hath not been reveal'd to the Person thus not assenting.

For a positive Proof of the foregoing Observation, see *Mar.* i. 15. *The time is fulfill'd, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Gospel*. *Chap.* vi. 12. *They went out and preached that Men should repent*. *Joh.* xx. 31. *These are written, that ye might*

might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Acts xx. 21. Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. xv. 18. For I will not dare to speak of any of those Things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient both in Word and Deed. Jam. i. 22. Be ye Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your own selves. In these Texts we see the forementioned Pre-requisites are required, Mar. xvi. 16. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. Luke xxiv. 47. That Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preach'd in his Name, Joh. iii. 16. God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life; Chap. xiii. 17. If ye know these Things, happy are ye if ye do them, Chap. xx. 31. These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have Life thro' his Name. Acts xi. 18. Then hath God also unto the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life. 2 Cor. vii. 10. Godly Sorrow worketh Repentance unto Salvation, not to be repented of. Heb. x. 39. We are not of them which draw back unto Perdition, but of them which believe, to the saving of the Soul. Rev. ii. 10. Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life. Here we see that Repentance, Faith in, and Faithfulness to Jesus Christ, have the benefit of Justification annex'd to them. Upon the Whole, I think it is abundantly evident that Repentance and Faith are pre-requisite to, and which make Christians the suitable Objects of the forementioned Favour of Justification.

I observe *Thirdly*, that as the Christians Justification is wholly of Grace, arising from the merciful Goodness of God, the Lawgiver; so this Favour is vouchsafed to obedient Believers upon the Account, and for the Sake of Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath us'd his Interest to obtain this Favour for them at
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God's Hand. Christ so recommended himself to his Father's Love, in undertaking the Cause of Sinners, and in prosecuting the Work of their Redemption (from Sin and Satan) with Sincerity and Faithfulness, even unto the Death of the Cross; that his Father hath as a Reward of that Undertaking, not only raised him from the Dead, and exalted him at his Right-Hand, and set him to be their Lord and Governour; but also he accepts of his Mediation and Intercession for them, and pardons them upon his Account, and for his Sake, and gives him Authority to acquit them at the Day of Trial; so that they are said to be justified by Christ, not only as he is appointed by his Father actually to acquit them at the Day of Judgment; but also they are justified by his Obedience unto Death, both as that Obedience is a prevailing Argument with Christians to exercise that Faith and Obedience which makes them the suitable Objects of this Grace; also, and more principally, as it is a prevailing Argument with God to bestow this Favour of Justification upon all true Believers. For the proof of this Observation, see *Joh* x. 17, 18. *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my Life, that I may take it again.—This Commandment I have received of my Father.*—*Phil.* ii. 8, 9. *He humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him.* *Heb.* xii. 2. *Who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God.* Here we see that Christ's humble Obedience unto Death, recommended him to his Father's Love, and was the Ground of his Exaltation at God's Right Hand, *Rom.* viii. 34. *Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the Right Hand of God; who also maketh Intercession for us.* *Heb.* vii. 25. *Wherefore he is able also to save to the uttermost those that come to God by him,*
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seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them. Chap. ix. 24. *Christ is not entred into the Holy Place made with Hands, — but into Heaven it self, now to appear in the presence of God for us.* Here we see that as Christ is exalted at God's Right Hand, so it is to appear in our behalf, and to make an Interest for the believing Penitent's Discharge: And the Apostle declares, that such is the prevalency of his Intercession, *that he is able to save to the uttermost those that come to God by him.* Eph. iv. 32. *Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* 1 Joh. ii. 12. *I write unto you, little Children, because your Sins are forgiven you for his (viz. Christ's) Names sake.* Here we see that Christ's Intercession is available for the Justification and Salvation of all true Believers; and consequently, that tho' their Justification is wholly of Grace, and not of Debt, yet it is vouchsafed upon the Account, and for the Sake of Christ Jesus our Lord, who uses his Interest to obtain this Favour for them at God's Hand: And this St. Paul declares, Rom. iii. 24. *That as they were justified freely by God's Grace, so it was thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ.*

I observe Fourthly, that this Favour of Justification will be vouchsafed to all true Believers at that Day, when the Body of Mankind shall be Summon'd to give up their Account to Christ Jesus our Lord. Then shall every true Christian, that is, every one in whom the foremention'd Pre-requisites are found, partake of God's Act of Grace, by being acquitted or absolved, and so discharged from that Punishment and Condemnation to which their Sins had justly exposed, and the righteous Law of God had bound them over. For the proof of this Observation, see Eccles. iii. 17. *I said in mine Heart, God shall judge the Righteous and the Wicked.* Chap. xii. 14. *God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil.* Acts x. 42. *To testify that it was he which was ordained of God to be*
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the Judge of Quick and Dead. Chap. xvii. 31. Because he hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordain'd. Rom. ii. 16. In the Day when God shall judge the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ. Chap. xiv. 10, 12. We must all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. — So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. 2 Tim. iv. 1. I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead. 1 Pet. iv. 5. Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the Quick and the Dead. Here we see, that as God hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by Jesus Christ; so all Persons, and all that they have done, shall pass under that Trial: Every Work, every secret Thing, whether Good or Evil; and all Persons, both Quick and Dead, the Righteous and the Wicked, Christians as well as others. For, saith St. Paul to the Christian Romans, We must all stand before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. Mat. xxv. 32 — 34. Before him (viz. Christ) shall be gathered all Nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth the Sheep from the Goats; and he shall set the Sheep on his Right Hand, but the Goats on the Left. Then shall the King say to them on his Right Hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, &c. Ver. 41. Then shall he say to them on the Left Hand, Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. Ver. 46. These shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life eternal. 2 Cor. v. 10. We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Rev. xx. 12, 13. I saw the Dead, small and great, stand before God, and the Books were open'd; and another Book was open'd, which is the Book of Life; and the Dead were judged out of those things

things which were written in the Books, according to their Works; and the Sea gave up the Dead which were in it; and Death and Hell gave up the Dead which were in them, and they were judged every Man according to their Works. Here we see that the result or issue of the aforesaid general Judgment, is the Acquitting or Condemning of the Persons brought to Trial, according as their Works have made them the suitable Objects of God's Favour or Displeasure; and consequently that the Justification of a Christian will then, and not till then, take place.

These four I take to be the principal Ingredients in a Christian's Justification. First, that it is wholly of Grace, and not of Debt; Secondly, that the Prerequisites to, and which make Christians the suitable Objects of this Favour are, Repentance, Faith in, and Faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ. Thirdly, the Motive or Argument with God for bestowing this Act of Grace upon all true Believers, is the Obedience of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who as he became Obedient unto the Death of the Cross, so he hath obtain'd to be a prevailing Intercessor for all obedient Believers, and God vouchsafes to pardon and acquit them upon his Account, and for his Sake. Fourthly, that this Grace will be actually dispensed to all the suitable Objects of it, at the Great and General Judgment.

The Case being thus stated, and proved, from hence we learn, first the needlessness of that great Debate, (*viz.*) Whether Christians are justified by Faith alone, or both by Faith, and Works; for if by Faith is meant a Believing what God hath reveal'd; or, in other Words, a Believing in the Person and Message of the Messiah, which is commonly called *Christian Faith*, or an assenting to the Truth of the Christian Revelation: And if by Works is meant Christian Obedience; or, in other Words, the sincere Practice of that unfeigned Repentance, Purity, Piety, Humility,

Justice, and Charity, which is suitable to, and founded upon that Belief; then it appears from the foregoing Observations, that we are justified neither by Faith nor Works. If by being justified by these, we mean, that these, or either of these is the Meritorious Cause of that Justification; because (as I have shewn) the Christian is justified wholly of God's free Grace, which excludes all Merit in the Person justified, when we use the Word Merit in its first and most proper Sense, as is supposed here. But if, by being justified by these, we mean, that these, or either of these is pre-requisite to, and that which makes Christians the suitable Objects of this Favour: Then it appears, from what hath been already observ'd, that Christians are justified both by Faith and by Works, because both Faith and Works are necessary to make Men the suitable Objects of this Grace, the latter always presupposing the former, tho' it is not always a necessary Consequence of it; for tho' Christian Obedience always supposes Christian Faith as its Root, yet Christian Faith doth not always bring forth the Fruit of Christian Obedience; and therefore, as St. James observes, Chap. ii. 14. and to the end of that Chapter, *that a Man may have Faith alone without Works*; so he likewise assures us that Faith alone doth not make us the suitable Objects of the foremention'd Grace of Justification, because both Faith and Works are necessary to that End.

I observe farther, that the Faith required pre-requisite to the Justification of a Christian, is the Belief of those Divine Truths which God hath reveal'd to us in and by Christ Jesus; and not a strong Persuasion in us that we are particularly Elected, that God loves us with his special Love, and that Christ died for us in particular, which some Men mis-call Justifying-Faith: I say, the Faith which makes Christians the suitable Objects of God's Grace of Justification (when it is accompanied with Christian Obedience,

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dience, or good Works) is the former only, and not the latter; because it is the former only, and not the latter of these, which can in any propriety of Speech be called Faith. For as in general Faith is an Assent of the Mind to the Truth of a Proposition reveal'd to us by another, so it is our assenting to those Truths that God hath reveal'd, which is properly Divine Faith: And therefore as God hath reveal'd the Truths of the Christian Religion, but hath no where reveal'd, that any particular Person is elected, or that he loves him with his special Love, or that Christ died for him in particular, there being no such Proposition to be found in any part of his Revelation; so consequently it is the former only, and not the latter, which is Divine Faith, or that Faith, which (when it is accompanied with Christian Obedience) disposes Christians for the Favour of Justification. Indeed as God has promised his special Love, &c. to all obedient Believers; whoever can be sure, upon good grounds, that they are such obedient Believers as God's Promise is made to, may be sure that God loves them with his special Love, &c. But then this Assurance is in no sense Divine Faith, but only a rational and just Conclusion drawn from its proper Premises; one of which Premises is Divine Faith, or an assenting to some Truth reveal'd by God.

From this Observation we may see the groundlessness of some Mens Confidence, (which they call, a being strong in Faith;) For if they can work up themselves to a strong Perswasion that they are Elect, that God loves them with his special Love, and that Christ died for them in particular; then they conclude that they have the Faith of God's Elect, or Justifying Faith; and consequently, that they are in a safe Condition, and that all is well. But as these Men are perswaded of what God hath not reveal'd, and as that is not Divine Faith; so this Perswasion,

whether it be well or ill grounded, is of no manner of use to them, with respect to their Justification ; because at the Day of Judgment, our Lord will deal with us according to what we really are, and not according to what we have confidently conceited our selves to be. Every one in whom the Pre-requisites of Faith and Christian Obedience are found, Christ will acquit at the Day of Trial, whether they think themselves the Objects of this Grace or not ; for, supposing such a Man to be strongly perswaded that he is a Reprobate, his Perswasion doth not make him so ; for his Error in this Case is not a Defect of Faith, but only an humble and groundless Jealousie of himself ; and therefore his Error will make no alteration in his Sentence. It may make his Life uncomfortable to him here, but it will not affect his future State, (except it makes him decline his Duty ;) because, as I said before, our Lord will not deal with us according to the Judgment we pass upon our selves, nor yet according to the Judgment that others pass upon us, but he will deal with us according to the Truth, and reality of our Case. So on the other side, supposing a Man strongly perswaded that he is Elect, if this Perswasion should be groundless, it might do the Person in whom it takes place, a great deal of hurt, in preventing his seeking and endeavouring after those Pre-requisites which are absolutely necessary to his safety, but it can do him no real Service, because our Lord will not treat Men according to their presumptuous Conceit of themselves, but according as he finds their Case to be ; and therefore if they are destitute of the Pre-requisites to God's Act of Grace, he will condemn them, notwithstanding their Perswasion to the contrary. This Observation likewise shews the groundlessness of some Men's Fears, who because they cannot find in themselves the forementioned strong perswasion that they are Elected, &c.

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From hence they are led to fear that they have not true Faith, and consequently that they are reprobated; whereas true Faith, or the Faith which makes Men the suitable Objects of God's Love, is a Believing what God hath reveal'd, and an answering the great Design of that Revelation; by conforming our Minds and Lives to the Mind and Will of God discover'd to us thereby.

But farther I say, If by Faith is meant a Covenant of Faith or Grace, (Faith and Grace in this Case being the same thing,) that is, if thereby is meant such a Covenant which gives Justification as a Favour to all those whose Faith and sincere Obedience makes them the suitable Objects of this Favour. And if by Works, is meant a Covenant of Works, even such a Covenant as does not give Justification as a Favour, but pays it as a Debt to all those whose Innocency or exact Obedience gives them a legal Right and Title to it. Then it appears from the foregoing Observations, that Christians are justified wholly, and only by Faith, or a Covenant of Faith, and not at all by Works, or a Covenant of Works: the Christians Justification flowing wholly and only from the merciful Goodness of God the Lawgiver, as I have shewn, and not from the Innocency of the Person justified.

We learn secondly, the groundlessness of that Opinion, that Christians are justified by the imputed Righteousness of Christ. Because the Christian's Justification is not founded upon the Innocency or Righteousness of the Person justified, but in the merciful Goodness of God the Lawgiver, and so it is wholly of Grace, and not of Debt, as I have shewn. But if the Righteousness of Christ is made the Christian's Righteousness, and if they are justified by virtue of the Righteousness of another, which is made their own by Imputation; it clearly follows, that their Justification is not of Grace, but of Debt. The Per-
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son thus standing in the Innocency or Righteousness of another, may lawfully demand it as his Right; and it would be an Act of Criminal Injustice in the Judge to with-hold it from him. For, whatever Grace might be exercised in imputing the Innocency of one Person to another; yet when that Innocency is thus imputed, then Justification becomes the Person's Right, who is thus possess'd of it; so that it is wholly of Debt, and not of Grace. I say, *If the Innocency of one is imputed to another.* Here we only suppose the thing for Argument sake, because in reality there is no such thing in nature; for Guilt and Innocency are personal, and stick so close to him in whom they take place, that they cannot be transposed from one to another. God may indeed, if he pleases, pardon the Guilty, and treat them as Innocent; and the Innocency of one Person may be an Argument with him to shew Kindness to another Person which is Guilty; but still the Guilt and Innocence of each, rests only upon the Person who exercised it; and this is plainly the Christian's Case. God is pleas'd to pardon believing Penitents, and to treat them as Innocent; and the Argument or Motive which enduces him to exercise this Grace, is the Innocency or Righteousness, or, in other Words, the humble Obedience of his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who is become an Intercessor for us; and upon whose Account, and for whose Sake, God is pleas'd to vouchsafe this Grace to penitent Believers. So that Men's Conceits of being justified by virtue of Christ's perfect Righteousness being imputed to them, has no Foundation, neither in the Nature of the Thing, nor in the Christian Revelation. The Christian Revelation every where represents the Christian's Justification to be of Grace, and not of Debt; and that God exercises his Mercy in the Pardon and Forgiveness of their Sins; and that they are justified by Faith, or a Covenant of Faith, and not by a Covenant of Works: In which
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Covenant of Faith nothing is required as the meritorious Cause of Justification; because in this Covenant God gives it wholly of his free Grace, *Rom. iv. 24. Eph. ii. 4. &c.* Which excludes all Merit, properly so called, both in the Person justified, and in any other that might be instrumental in procuring that Favour for him, *Rom. xi. 6. And if by Grace, then it is no more of Works,* (either of the Person himself, or of any other that shall work, and so merit it for him,) *otherwise Grace is no more Grace: But if it be of Works,* (either of the Person himself, or of any other that shall work in his stead,) *then it is no more Grace, otherwise Work is no more Work.*

If it should be here objected, that *St. Paul, Rom. iv. 3, 6, faith, That Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for Righteousness;* and that *David* describes the Blessedness of the Man unto whom God imputes Righteousness without Works: Seeing then that Righteousness is imputed, it must be the Righteousness of another (*viz.*) Christ, because the Person to whom it is here said to be imputed, had no Personal Righteousness of his own, he being without Works, as the Text expresses it.

I answer: As to *Abraham's Faith being accounted to him for Righteousness,* this proves fully what I am pleading for, (*viz.*) That *Abraham* was not justified by the imputed Righteousness of another; for if he had, then there had been no room nor need for his own Faith to be counted to him for Righteousness; he being perfectly Righteous himself, by having the perfect Righteousness of Christ imputed to him. But *Abraham* not being able to stand upon that Foot, God was pleas'd to justify him freely by his Grace; and to accept of his Faith, and sincere Obedience, as that which disposed, and made him meet for this Favour, instead of that perfect Obedience which would have given him a legal Title to it. And as to the Blessedness *David* speaks of, that did not consist in a
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Person's being made Righteous, by virtue of the Righteousness of another imputed to him; but it consisted in his having a Share in the Mercy of God, which was exercised in the forgiveness of his Sins, and in receiving him into a State of Favour, as if he had never transgress'd. And that this is the Truth of the Case, appears from the following Words, *ver. 7, 8. Blessed are they whose Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sins are covered; Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord will not impute Sin.* Here we see that this Blessedness doth not consist in a Person's standing in the imputed Righteousness of another, but in his having a share in the Mercy of God, who forgives him his Sins, not imputing them unto him, that is, not punishing him for them, but treating him as if he had not sinned.

If it should be here replied, that *Isaiab* saith, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*, Chap. lxiv. 6. and that *St. Paul*, *Phil. iii. 9.* saith, *That he desired to be found in Christ, not having his own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is thro' the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith.* And that *St. Johu* saith, *1 Joh. iii. 7. Little Children, let no Man deceive you; he that doth Righteousness, is righteous, even as he (viz. Chrst) is righteous.* Here, if all our Personal Righteousness is as *filthy Rags*, which stink in the Nostrils of the most High, according to the Prophet's Declaration; and if *St. Paul* desired to be found having Righteousness, but not having his own Righteousness, both which are expressed in his Words; it will necessarily follow, that as our Righteousness is unacceptable to God, so *St. Paul* desired to be found in the Righteousness of another, which he could not be found in, except that Righteousness was made his own by imputation. Again, if he that doth Righteousness is Righteous, even as, or to that degree in which *Christ* is Righteous; from hence it will follow, that Righteousness is made his by imputation; because his

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own Righteousness cannot make him Righteous, as; or to that Degree of Righteousness Christ hath attained to, which is asserted by St *John*.

I answer, 'Tis to be observed that the good Works, or righteous Acts of good Men are so far from being as filthy Rags which stink in the Nostrils of God, that, on the contrary, they are like a sweet Perfume, which is highly acceptable to him. For the proof of this Observation, see *Act. 10. 4.* *And he (viz. the Angel,) said unto him (Cornelius,) Thy Prayers and thine Alms are come up for a Memorial before God.* *Heb. 13. 16.* *To do Good, and to Communicate, forget not; for with such Sacrifice God is well pleased.* I observe farther, that the good Works of Hypocrites and Wicked Men, who perform some Acts of Obedience to God's Law, but live in the wilful habitual Breach of the most considerable Parts of it; such Men's good Works or Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags, which stink in the Nostrils of God, (if we may so speak.) The People of *Israel* put on an Appearance of Holiness, and did many Acts of Obedience to the Ceremonial Part of God's Law, which the Prophet calls *their Righteousnesses*, when at the same time their Hands were full of Blood and Rapine, and other Abominations: And this their abominable Wickedness made even their Acts of Obedience, which otherways were good, (because commanded to be done,) to be as filthy Rags in God's sight. And that this is the true State of the Case, appears plainly in the first Chapter of *Isaiah's* Prophecy, where he tells the People, *that their New-moons, and their appointed Feasts, were hateful to God, and that he was weary to bear them, ver. 14.* And the Reason given is, *that their hands were full of Blood, ver. 15.* As to the words of St Paul in *Phil. 3. 9.* he is there speaking of a two-fold Righteousness, (not such a Righteousness as gave a legal Title to Justification, but only such as made Men the suitable Objects of that Grace.) The first sort was that Righteousness which

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consisted in a strict Observance of the Ceremonial Law of *Moses*, which he mentions *ver. 6. As touching the Righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.* The second sort of Righteousness was Christian Obedience, or a Conformity of Mind and Life, to the Mind and Life of Christ, which the Gospel required as necessary to our Acceptance in God's Sight. Now the Apostle desired that he might be found in Christ, that is, a true Christian; not having the former, but the latter Sort of Righteousness; because the former would do him no Service as a Christian, but the latter would render him a suitable Object of Divine Grace. And tho' the Apostle uses the Term, *Mine own Righteousness*, this is not opposed to the Righteousness of another, which he desired to be found in; but it is the Righteousness of the Ceremonial Law of *Moses*, opposed to the Righteousness of Christian Obedience which the Gospel recommended. And to make the Text answer the full and true Meaning of the Apostle, I conceive it may be fill'd up, and read thus; Tho' I have as much ground to boast as any Man, with respect to external Privileges and Performances; yet these are so mean in my Opinion, that I do esteem them but as Dross and Dung in comparison of that inestimable Treasure the Gospel, for which I have suffer'd the Loss of all things, and do count them but Dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own Righteousness which is of the Law, or That Righteousness which consists in an external Observance of the Ceremonial Law of *Moses*, (which the *Jews*, and judaizing Christians value themselves upon;) but I do desire to be found a true Christian, having That Righteousness or Christian Obedience which my Faith in Christ ought to produce in me, and which will make me the suitable Object of God's Grace. As to the words of St *John*, I confess the Apostle designed hereby to convince Men that it was in vain for them to expect that their Faith in Christ, or their Profess-

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on of the Christian Religion, or any extraordinary Illumination, or any pretended Love to God or Christ, or Union with them, would be of any Service to them, with respect to their Acceptance with God, except they did bring forth the Fruits of Righteousness or Christian Obedience. And as to the Term, *Even as*, the Apostle did not intend an Equality, but only the Certainty and Likeness of the Thing to that it is compared with. A Case like this we have in *ver. 3*. *Every Man that hath this hope in him* (viz. of seeing Christ, and being made like unto him,) *purifieth himself even as he* (viz. Christ) *is pure*. Here St John doth not mean by the Term, *Even as*, an Equality of Purity, but only a Likeness, and the Certainty of the thing: Which is as much as if he had said; Every Man that in good earnest hopes to see Christ at his Appearing, and be made like unto him, purifies himself like as Christ is pure, or as certainly as Christ is pure. So in like manner, by the Term, *Even as*, in the present Case, the Apostle means that he which doth Righteousness is righteous, like as Christ did Righteousness, and is righteous; or he is righteous as certainly, as Christ did righteously, and is so. Here I think likewise that there are several Words wanting to express the full and true Meaning of the Apostle, which when fill'd up may be read thus; Little Children, let no Men deceive you in this important Point; for he, and only he that doth Righteousness, is righteous to God's acceptance, even like as Christ did righteously, and is righteous; or as certainly as Christ did Righteousness, and is so.

We learn, thirdly, from the foregoing Observations, that the Doctrine of Christ's paying a full and equal Satisfaction (in the original and strict Sense of the Word) to the Justice of God, for the Sins and Offences of Mankind, and of Christians being Justified upon that Foot; I say, We learn that these Doctrines are erroneous. For if Sinners are justified freely by God's

Grace; if God exercises his Mercy in the Forgiveness of their Sins; if this Forgiveness is obtain'd to them by the Intercession of Christ, who uses his Interest with God for them; and if God pardons the believing Penitent upon Christ's Account, and for his sake, (as I have plainly shewn;) from hence it will necessarily and avoidably follow, that there hath been no such Equal Satisfaction paid to God; because if their had been, then Justification would be of Debt, and not of Grace; for, whatever Grace might be exercised in the Satisfier, there could be none in the Satisfied. When such Satisfaction had been made, a Release became due; and there could be no such thing as forgiveness of Sins, because there would be no Sin to be forgiven; neither could Christ become an Intercessor for the Sinner's Pardon, because he had prevented himself by making full Satisfaction for the Damage done; neither could God forgive the Penitent upon Christ's Account, and for his Sake, because there was no room nor place for the exercising of such Mercy.

We learn, fourthly, the Vanity of That Conceit, that Christians are justified before they are Sanctified, yea, before they were in Being. For if Justification is an acquitting of the Person under trial, then no Man can be justified (properly speaking,) till he hath passed that Trial, which will be at the general Judgment, as I have shewn. Indeed when the word *Justified* is used in a Secondary and less proper Sense, then Men may be said to be justified long before that Tribunal, as when a Persons Innocency is vindicated from the unjust Slander it was under, the Person thus vindicated may be said to be justified, in a secondary and less proper Sense of that word: Thus our Lord was said to be *justified in* (or by) *the Spirit*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. that is; as he had declar'd himself to be the Messiah and Saviour of the World; so he was prov'd to be so by that Testimony or Witness which the Holy Ghost bore to him, in those Miraculous Works that

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did attend him, and particularly by that quickning Power which rais'd him from the Dead; and so he was justified, or vindicated in (or by) the Spirit from those unjust Reproaches cast upon him by the Unbelieving Jews, as being an Impostor and Deceiver. So again, Men may, in a secondary and less proper sense be said to be justified when they are approved of God and accepted in his Sight; Thus *Luk. 18. 14*, it is said, *The Publican went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee*; that is, the humble Confession of the Publican was more approved, and better accepted of God, than the proud Boasting of the Pharisee was. So again, Men may be said to be justified in a secondary and less proper sense of that Term, when they come under those Dispositions and Qualifications, to which the Favour of Justification is annex'd; Thus, *1 Cor. 6. 11*, *And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God*; that is, the Apostles in Christ's Name, and the Holy Ghost, had been instrumental in working their Conversion from the Sins mention'd in the two preceding Verses, which were destructive of Salvation; and so they were by Their Means brought into a state of fitness or preparedness for the Favour of Justification to be exercised upon them in due time; and so they were said to be justified by these, not that they were justified by these in fact; for That will not be perform'd by the Holy Spirit, nor by any in Christ's Name, but by Christ himself in his own Person, at the last Day, *Matth. 25. 31*, and to the end of the Chapter: But they were said to be justified by Them in a less proper sense, as they were prepar'd and made the suitable Objects of this Favour of Justification. Again, Men may be said to be justified in a secondary and less proper sense, with respect to the Purpose and Intention of God; long before their Justification doth actually take place; Even as the believing Gen-

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tils were said to be elected to equal Priviledges with the *Jews*, under the Kingdom of the Messiah, long before That Election did actually take place. Thus *Eph. 1. 4.* *According as he hath chosen * us in him* (*viz. Christ*) *before the foundation of the World, &c.* That by the being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the World, is meant the believing *Gentiles* being elected or chosen to equal Priviledges with the *Jews* under the Kingdom of the Messiah, is evident from the Drift and Scope of this Epistle, and in particular in the first eight Verses of the third Chapter, where St *Paul* observes that the *Gentiles* being fellow-Heirs with the *Jews*, and of the same Body with them, and Partakers with them of God's Promise in Christ by the Gospel, was a Mystery which had been hid from Ages and Generations, being as it were laid up in the Purpose and Intention of God, but now had actually taken place by the Apostle's Preaching among the *Gentiles*. Here we see that the *Gentiles* were said to be chosen in Christ before the foundation of the World; which could not be true in fact; for till *Abraham's* time, there was no such thing as *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and as there were no *Gentiles* to be the Objects of Divine Choice, so consequently in fact there was no such Choice. To elect or chuse a Person or Persons to any Office or Benefit, presupposes both the actual Existence of the Subject elected, and others which that Subject is chosen or elected out of; and therefore the *Gentiles* could not be actually elected, till they did actually take place in the World. God did purpose and intend before the Foundation of the World, that he would vouchsafe this Favour to the *Gentiles*

* As the Apostle was the Minister of Christ to the *Gentiles*, and as he wrote to them, so he personated a *Gentile*, and put himself into the Number of those that were chosen or elected in Christ, and uses the Term *Us*.

when the Kingdom of the Messiah should take place; and so he is said to chuse them before the Foundation of the World, not in Fact, but in Purpose and Intention. So in like manner God might purpose from or before the Foundation of the World, the Justification of all penitent Believers, at the Day of Judgment; and so he may be said in a less proper sense to justify them from or before the Foundation of the World, not in Fact, but in his Purpose, and Intention. Thus we see, that when the word *Justification* is used in a secondary and less proper sense, then Men may be said to be justified already. But tho' Men may be said to be justified, when that Term is used in a secondary and less proper sense; yet this is no proof that they are so in the first and most proper sense of that Term, because in this sense no one will be actually justified or acquitted till the Day of Judgment, as has been shewn.

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APPENDIX.

Being an Enquiry concerning the *SON*, if he be *Equal* to the *FATHER*, and is the *Supreme G O D*, whether all that believe him to be *Inferior* and *Subordinate* to the *FATHER* are in a *Damnable State*, because they rest for Justification and Salvation as upon a Creature, and exercise their Faith and Hope upon him as such.

IN Answer to this Enquiry I observe, *First*, That if the Name *Creature* be properly applied, when applied to every *derived* Being; then in that sense the Son is confessedly a Creature; because the Scriptures declare that he derived his Being from the Father: See *Joh. 3. 16. God so loved the World. that he gave his only Begotten Son &c, Joh. 6. 57. As the Living Father hath sent me, and I Live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall Live by me.* In these Texts it is as plainly asserted as Words can express it, That the Son received or derived his Being from the Father, and that he depends upon the Father for his continuing to be. Therefore, I say as before; If the Name *Creature* be properly applied, when applied to every *Derived* Being; then the Son is confessedly a Creature, because he derived his Being from the Father: But if the Name *Creature* be applicable only to such Things as were produced after

after any certain particular manner, then the Son may very well be conceived Not to be a Creature.

Secondly, I observe, That whatever different Apprehensions we may have of the Son of God, those Apprehensions make no alterations in him; but he still continues to be what he really is, notwithstanding our Mistaken Notions concerning him: From which it will follow, that if he is the Father's Equal and the Supreme God, whosoever trusts in him, trusts in the Father's Equal and the Supreme God, whatever mistaken Notions they may have concerning him. All that can be said in this Case, is only this, Whoever thinks him to be what he really is not, or that thinks him not to be what he really is when they make him the Object of their Faith and Trust, have only a Mistaken Notion concerning him. Their Faith and Trust is the same, whatever he is, and he is the same which is the Object of that Faith and Trust, and therefore all the difference must lie in this (*viz.*) Their Mistaken Notion concerning him whom they make the Object of that Faith and Trust. And so the Question will rest here, Whether this Mistaken Notion will be a Bar to our Justification and Salvation.

For a clear Answer to this Question, I conceive we must go back to the Christian Covenant, because it is That alone which discovers what is necessary to our Justification and Salvation. And therefore I say, if the Christian Covenant hath made Faith in the Son, as the Father's Equal, and as the supreme God, necessary to our Justification and Salvation, then whoever thinks otherways of the Son, is excluded from that Covenant-mercy. But if Faith in the Son as such, *viz.* as the Father's Equal, and as the Supreme God, is not made necessary by the Christian Covenant to our Justification and Salvation, then our Mistaking in this, cannot be a Bar to our Justification and Salvation; because whatsoever is necessary to that End, is declared to be so in that Covenant:

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Therefore whatsoever is not declared to be so in that Covenant, the want of it can be no Bar to our Justification and Salvation. Moreover I say farther, that whosoever makes any thing necessary to the Justification and Salvation of a Sinner, which the Christian Covenant hath not made so ; makes an Alteration in and an Addition to that Covenant which Christ is the alone Mediator of, and makes the Way to eternal Life straiter than God and Christ hath made it.

Now that Faith in the Son, as the Father's Equal and as the Supreme God, is not made Necessary to the Justification and Salvation of a Sinner, will appear from the sacred Scriptures, wherein the Christian Covenant is contain'd, and wherein Faith in the Son is required as necessary to our Justification and Salvation. Matt. 16. 15.—18. *Whom say ye that I am ? And Simon Peter answer'd, and said, Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God. And Jesus answer'd and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for Flesh and Blood hath not reveal'd it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven : And I say unto thee, That—upon this Rock I will build my Church. Joh. 11. 25—27. Jesus said unto her (Martha) I am the Resurrection and the Life ; he that believeth in me, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth shall never Die : Believest thou this ? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord ; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God which should come into the World. Chap. 20. 21. These things are written, that ye might believe, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have Life thro' his Name. Act. 8. 37. Philip said, If thou believest with all thine Heart, thou mayest (be Baptized,) and he (the Eunuch) answer'd, and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God : — And Philip Baptized him. Rom. 10. 8—10. That is the Word of Faith which we preach, That if thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart that*

that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness, and with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation. Here we see, the Faith which the Christian Covenant makes Necessary to our Justification and Salvation, is a believing That Person whom God approved by Miracles, Wonders, and Signs which God did by him in the midst of the Jews, (Act. 2. 22,) That he is Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God: And Faith in him as the Father's Equal and as the Supreme God, is not made necessary by the Christian Covenant to our Justification and Salvation: From which it will follow, That our Mistaking in this, can be no Bar to our Justification and Salvation.

AN ENQUIRY

CONCERNING

Sinners Deliverance from Condemnation:

Wherein the Case of *Christ's Satisfaction* is consider'd and impartially stated, according to the Scripture Account of it.

Rom. 8. 1. *There is therefore now no Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.*

BEfore I enter upon this Enquiry, I think it proper to make a few previous Observations.

First, I observe, that Sin is either a doing that which the Light of Nature or Divine Revelation makes a Crime, or the omitting to do that which the Light of Nature or Divine Revelation makes a Duty.

Secondly, I observe, that as God is the Original Supreme Cause of the Being and Relations of Things, upon whom we chiefly depend, and to whom we owe our highest Obligations; so all Sin is chiefly and primarily committed against him. And as God is absolutely Independent and Self-existing; so when his Creatures have sinn'd against him, they are wholly at his Pleasure to be disposed of as he sees good. From which it will follow by a necessary Consequence, that it is the Right and Property of God to use his Pleasure either in pardoning or punishing the Sin which is committed against him; and if he do punish for Sin, he is at liberty to exercise what Kind, Degree, or Duration

Duration of Punishment he thinks fit, provided The Punishment do not exceed the Demerit of the Crime.

If it should be objected, that the Holiness or Rectitude of God's Nature does dispose him to hate Sin, and to manifest his Displeasure against it, by punishing the Sinner, if he obstinately persists in his Folly without Repentance; and that the Justice of God doth oblige him both to punish the Sinner, and to proportion the Punishment to the Measure of the Guilt contracted.

I answer; Whether and how far the Holiness of God doth dispose him to hate Sin, and to punish the Sinner, I shall not here enquire; because if we allow what the Objection supposes, yet still he is at liberty either to pardon or punish the Sinner as he sees good or fit; because those Dispositions which are in God arising from the Rectitude of his Nature, do not take from him the Freedom of his Will; And therefore tho' God is disposed to hate Sin, and to punish the Sinner, because his Wisdom is supposed to judge it best and fittest to do so, yet still he is at liberty with respect to his Power and Will to do otherwise. As to that part of the Objection which respects his Justice; I say, Every Being is left free by the Laws of common Equity or Justice to dispose of his own peculiar Property as he will, and is not accountable to any for the Use or Non-use, the Enjoying or Not enjoying, or Disposing of the same. Seeing therefore that the Right of punishing or pardoning a Sinner is God's peculiar Property, in which no one is interested but himself, it will follow, that God may use his Pleasure either in pardoning the Sinner, or punishing him to a greater or lesser Degree, without being guilty of criminal Injustice, provided the Punishment doth not exceed the Demerit of the Crime (as I observ'd before,) seeing no one is wrong'd by such a Ministration, nor any Occasion given for a just Complaint.

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Thirdly, I observe, that if God is pleased to punish the Sinner for his Folly, there is nothing which the Sinner can do for himself, nor which any other can do or suffer for him, which in the Nature of the thing can properly merit his Exemption from Punishment, or give a Right to claim his Discharge at God's Hand; And Here (which I desire may be carefully observed through the whole following Discourse,) we must understand the Word *Merit* in the first and strictest Sense of that Term, (*viz.*) That which in its own nature gives a legal Right and Title to what is supposed to be merited by it, considered as separate from all Grace and Bounty, Pre-engagements or Promises of him who is the Proprietor in what is thus Merited, antecedent to that Meritorious Act.

First, I say, There is nothing which the Sinner can do for himself which can thus merit any thing at God's Hand; for as to Repentance which consists in a Sense and Conviction of Guilt, a deep Sorrow, Humiliation, and Pain of Mind that we have done amiss, a Confession of our Fault, and an actual forsaking it; Tho' this may dispose us for, and make us the suitable Subjects of God's Mercy, yet this doth not in the least Measure merit our Discharge from Punishment; because as our Repentance doth not take away or lessen our Guilt, (we being equally as guilty after that Repentance as before,) so neither is that Repentance any way profitable unto God, and therefore cannot bring him under any Obligation unto us upon the account of it.

If it should be here objected, that God's Goodness doth dispose, and in some sort oblige him to discharge the Sinner upon his Repentance, and therefore that Repentance is Meritorious.

I answer; Allowing what the Objection supposes, (*viz.*) that God's Goodness obliges him to discharge the Penitent; yet this Repentance doth not merit that Discharge, but only disposes and fits the Person (who exercises

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exercises it) for God's Mercy : for if Repentance did merit as aforesaid, then God's Obligation to discharge the Penitent would not arise from his Goodness, (as the Objection supposes,) but from his Justice ; because it would not be an Act of Goodness, but Justice for God to exercise it : The Criminal might demand it as his Right, and it would be an Act of criminal Injustice in God to withhold it from him ; and therefore if God's Goodness doth oblige him to discharge the Penitent, then this is something in God himself which brings him under this Obligation, and not any thing in the Sinner which merits it at his Hand.

As to Works of Supererogation or Good Works over and above Duty, I think, properly speaking, there is no such thing ; because as God is the original supreme Cause of the Being and Relations of all things, so I think he hath made it the Duty of every rational conscious Being, (even from the Being and Relations in which he hath placed them) to fill up the Relation in which they stand, by doing every thing which is fit and proper to be done ; and consequently every Good Work which every derived rational conscious Being is capable of performing, comes within this general Rule of Duty, and Law of God, founded in the Being and Relations (and so in the Reason) of Things. And likewise whatever is unfit or improper to be done, is a Defect of Duty from this Rule. If there are any Works which are neither fit nor unfit, neither proper nor improper, such Works are neither Good nor Evil, but are of an Indifferent Nature, and so are not within the present Question. But allowing, (tho' not really granting) that there are such Good Works which are over and above Duty, yet such Good Works cannot in the nature of the thing merit any thing at God's Hand ; because, *First*, no Being whatever, (no not even the Only-begotten Son of God) can give to God any thing but what is God's own antecedent

antecedent to that Gift; for as all derived Beings received their Beings and all that they are and have from God; so from hence it will follow, that if any one, or every one of these should offer up themselves, and all that they are or have, to God, they do but return to him his own: they give him that which he hath a greater Interest in, and Right to, than themselves, and therefore the giving to God his own, cannot in Justice be supposed to lay him under any Obligation upon the Account of it. *Secondly*, whatever any one doth for God, he doth it by that Ability which he originally received from him; and consequently can never oblige him by such a Performance. *Thirdly*, whatever any one offers up to, or doth for God, cannot upon any account be profitable unto him; and consequently cannot lay him under any Obligation, which is the Case of *Merit*.

I say, *secondly*, There is nothing which any other can do or suffer for the Sinner, which *originally* in the *Nature of the Thing* can merit his Discharge from Condemnation. That nothing which any other can do for the Sinner, is in this strict and proper sense meritorious, appears from the Reasons last mention'd; (*viz.*) because, first, there is nothing which any one can give to God, but what is God's own antecedent to that Gift; and secondly, because there is nothing which any one can do for God, but what is done by an Ability and Power originally received from him; and thirdly, because there is nothing which any one can give to, or do for God, which can in any respect be profitable to him; and consequently there is nothing which any Person can do for the Sinner, which in the nature of the thing can merit any thing from God for him. So likewise neither is there any thing which any one can suffer for him, which in its own Nature can properly merit his Discharge from Condemnation. The Truth of this will appear if we consider first, that as Guilt is a Personal thing, which cannot be trans-
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fed from one to another, and as it is very just that the guilty Person should bear his own Burden, by suffering the Punishment due for his Fault: and as the punishing or pardoning of the Sinner, is the peculiar Property of God; so if any one should appear in the Sinners behalf, and should offer to make Satisfaction to God for the Offence committed, and should suffer for him all that is possible to be suffer'd to that End; yet still God is at liberty to reject whatever is thus suffer'd in the Sinners behalf, and may justly punish him in his own Person, notwithstanding what hath been suffer'd for him in the Person of another; it being no way contrary to Justice to demand Satisfaction from the Offender, and to reject or refuse Satisfaction from any other hand. From hence it will follow, that there is nothing which any one can suffer for another, which in its own Nature doth strictly merit the Sinners Discharge; for if it did in its own Nature thus merit, tho' God did not require such Suffering, yet it would be the Sinners Right to be exempted from Punishment, and it would be an Act of criminal Injustice in God to lay any Punishment upon him. But that God may punish the Sinner in his own Person, and very justly refuse what is done or suffer'd by another in the Sinners behalf, I think no Person who understands what Justice and Equity is, will deny; and consequently there is nothing which another can suffer in the Sinners behalf, that in the nature of the thing can merit Deliverance for him. The Truth of this will farther appear, if we consider, Secondly, that there can be no such thing as making Satisfaction by another in the present Case; for tho' in the Case of Debt, another may make Satisfaction for us by fully repairing the Damage we have done, or paying to the full what we owe, yet in the Case of Guilt it is quite otherways; for as no one can in this Case undo what another has done, and as Guilt cannot be transposed from one Person to another, so the Nature of the Thing requires,

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that if any do suffer for Sin, it must be the Guilty Person, and he only; because Punishment in the present Case is a Chastizing the Fool for his Folly, and a Vindication of the just Authority of God, which hath been affronted by the Disobedience of his Creature; but if the Punishment be transposed from the Guilty to another who is substituted to suffer in his stead, then in that Case the Fool is not at all chastized for his Folly, neither is the Authority of God vindicated thereby, and so the Ends of Punishment are not at all answer'd. For as it is unreasonable to suppose that God punishes the Sinner for Punishments sake, to gratify an angry Passion; so if he should punish the Innocent in the Guilty's stead, this would be so far from retrieving his Honour, so as to repair the Damage done by Sin, that on the contrary it would add to his Dishonour, by representing him as unjust and unholy in punishing the Innocent, and letting the Guilty go free. And tho' the Person suffering should voluntarily offer himself to suffer in the Sinners behalf, it makes no alteration in the Case; because such a voluntary Offer makes no alteration in the Sinner; he is as guilty after it as before, and consequently is as much the proper Object of Punishment as before. And the Innocent Person, as he doth not contract the Guilt of the other by that voluntary Offer, (he being as Innocent as before,) so That Offer cannot make him the proper Object of that Punishment, and consequently the Suffering of the Innocent cannot make Satisfaction for the Guilty.

From the whole I think it plainly appears that there is nothing which the Sinner can do for himself, nor which any other can do or suffer for him, which in the Nature of the thing can merit his Exemption from Punishment, or give a Right to claim his Deliverance at God's hand.

Fourthly, I observe, that as the original Right to pardon or punish the Sinner, is the peculiar Property
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or Prerogative of God ; and as there is nothing which the Sinner can do for himself, nor which any other can do or suffer in his behalf, which in the Nature of the thing can merit his Discharge ; from hence it will follow, that it is wholly at God's Pleasure to give Pardon upon what Terms he will, and to require what Qualification he pleases in those he thinks fit to make the Objects of his Mercy.

Fifthly, I observe, that when God hath offer'd Pardon to the Sinner upon any Terms, and under any Qualifications ; when those Terms are made good in such sort as God ordain'd, and when those Qualifications are attain'd which he required, then the Person which hath made good the Terms requir'd, hath a Right, by vertue of God's Promise, to claim Forgiveness for the Sinner at God's hand ; and it would be an Act of criminal Injustice in God to withhold it from him. But then it ought to be remembred that this Right to claim Pardon is not founded in Merit, but in Grace ; for tho' when any one has made good the Terms requir'd, he then has a Right to claim the Pardon promis'd, yet that Right is not founded upon the proper and original Meritoriousness of these Terms, but upon the free Promise of God, which he has been pleas'd to make as a Reward of Grace to the Performance of those Terms, the Right of Claim depending wholly upon that Promise : because if no such Promise had been made, then the Performance of those Terms would have given no Right at all.

Sixthly, I observe, that whoever makes good the Terms required (for the Sinner,) which God has promis'd Pardon to, or whoever doth That with which God is so well pleas'd as to pardon the Sinner for its sake ; such a one may fitly be esteem'd a Saviour or Redeemer to the Sinner ; for tho' he hath not done that which in its own Nature merits the Sinner's Dis-

charge; yet forasmuch as he hath done what God requires and accepts as the Condition of his Mercy, or doth that which God is so well pleas'd with as to give the Sinner his Pardon for its sake, he is in a secondary and less proper Sense a Redeemer to the Sinner; because he hath done what God required and accepted to that End; and because the Sinners actual Deliverance is the Issue and Consequence of it.

Seventhly, I observe, that whatever God is pleas'd to make the Condition of his Mercy, or whatever is done which he is so well pleas'd with as to pardon the Sinner for its sake; the Performance or doing of that thing may in a secondary and less proper Sense be called, The Price of that Redemption; and the Sinner may be said to be redeemed by it, or bought with it; For tho' the performance or doing of that thing, doth not in its own Nature *Merit* the Sinners Discharge, yet forasmuch as God is pleas'd to make those Terms the Condition of his Mercy, and to pardon the Sinner upon it's account, the performance of those Terms becomes, by the free Grace of God, in a secondary and less proper Sense, the Price of that Deliverance,

Eighthly I observe, that whatever God is pleas'd to accept as the Price of of the Sinners Redemption, the paying of that Price may in a secondary and less proper Sense, (and according to the common way of speaking,) be said to *merit* that Forgiveness; just as we use to say, when the Prince advances the Soldier to some high Post for his Service in the Wars, that he is advanced for his *Merit*. Now tho' the Soldier hath *Merited* Nothing by his Service, but his Wages, when we use the word *Merit* in its first and most proper sense, because That Wages is all that he covenanted for, and so is all that he hath a legal Right to claim, and is all that the Prince is in Justice obliged to give; yet forasmuch

asmuch as his good Service is such as hath recommended him to his Prince's Favour, therefore those good Services are said in a secondary and less proper sense to *Merit* that Favour for him at his Prince's hand. So in like manner whatever God is so well pleas'd with as to pardon the Sinner for its sake, That may in a secondary and less proper sense be said to *merit* that Forgiveness at God's hand.

Thus much I thought proper to observe as previous to the following Enquiry. But note, that when I say God would be criminally Unjust if he did so or so, I do not mean that he is guilty of the Breach of a Law which he is obliged to submit to by any Superior Authority, but only that he would act contrary to the universal Rule of Equity.

The ENQUIRY

This Enquiry consists of four general Parts: *First*, whether the believing penitent Sinner will be delivered from Condemnation; *Secondly*, whether Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has obtain'd That Deliverance for him; *Thirdly*, whether That Deliverance is obtain'd by his Sufferings and Death; *Fourthly*, whether his Sufferings and Death do in their own Nature and in the strict Sense of the word, *Merit* that Deliverance, and are a full and equal Satisfaction to God for the Sins and Offences of all believing penitent Sinners.

First, I am to enquire whether the believing penitent Sinner will be deliver'd from Condemnation. But before I enter upon this Enquiry, I think it proper to premise, First, what we are to understand by these Terms, *viz.* Sinner, Condemnation, Deliverance from Condemnation, Believing, and Penitent.

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As to the Term *Sinner*; I have in my previous Observations shewn, that by Sin I mean the doing that which the Light of Nature, or Divine Revelation makes a Crime; or the omitting to do that which the Light of Nature, or Divine Revelation makes a Duty. Consequently whoever does, or omits to do as aforesaid, comes under the Denomination of a Sinner. By the Term *Condemnation*, I understand That Sentence to Punishment, which Sin has justly exposed, and the righteous Law of God hath bound the Sinner over to. By *Deliverance from Condemnation*, I understand the obtaining Pardon and Forgiveness from God, so as that the Sinner (with respect to a future State) is wholly exempted from that Punishment which Sin hath made him obnoxious to; and that he will be justified or acquitted at God's Bar, and restored to God's Favour, as if he had never transgressed. By *Believing*, I understand two Things; *First*, Faith in; and *Secondly*, Faithfulness to Jesus Christ. Faith in him, is a being perswaded (upon rational Grounds) that the Person which the four Evangelists have given us the History of his Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, is the Christ, the Son of God; and that the good Tidings which he proclaim'd is true, (*viz.*) That God is in (or by) this Christ reconciling sinful Mankind to himself. Faithfulness to Jesus Christ, is an honest Profession of his Name and Truth, a willing and faithful Submission to his Kingdom and Government, a patient bearing of his Cross, and a persevering in hope of the Heavenly Inheritance. And as to the Term *Penitent*, I have in my previous Observations shewn, that Repentance consists, first, in an Awakening Sense of the evil Nature, and the dreadful Consequences of Sin, and a Conviction of our own Guilt; secondly, in a deep Sorrow, Humiliation, and pain of Mind, that we have done amiss; thirdly, in a Confession of our Folly; and fourthly, in an actual Forsaking it: Consequently whoever doth this

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in Sincerity of Heart, comes under the Denomination of a *Penitent*.

I premise, *Secondly*, That as this and the following Enquiries relate wholly to what is contain'd in the Christian Revelation, so it is from That Revelation alone we shall seek for Satisfaction.

I premise, *Thirdly*, that the Persons referr'd to and intended by me in these Enquiries, are such as at one time or other have, or might have had (were it not their own Fault) Christ reveal'd to them; for as no Man can believe in him of whom he hath not heard, so his Infidelity (if it may be so called) cannot be a Crime; because whenever Faith becomes a Duty, it is when the Proposition we are to assent to, hath some way or other been discover'd and made known to us, or at least might have been had we not wilfully turned our Backs upon it: Therefore what Method God will be pleas'd to take with those which never heard of Christ, as it is what we are not concern'd in, so it comes not within the compass of our Enquiry.

Having premised these things, I come now to the Enquiry, Whether the believing Penitent Sinner will be deliver'd from Condemnation; which is answer'd in the Affirmative, and I think will be sufficiently proved, when I have shewn, *First*, that Faith and Repentance are such Qualifications as God hath required the Sinner to put on. *Secondly*, that if those are wanting in him, he will be condemned. *Thirdly*, that they are such Qualifications in the Sinner as God hath annex'd Pardon and Salvation to.

First, I am to shew, that Faith and Repentance are such Qualifications as God requires Sinners to put on: For this, see *Joh. 20. 31.* *These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God.* *Mar. 6. 12.* *They went out and preached, That Men should*

should Repent. Aēt. 17. 30. But now commandeth all Men every where to Repent. Mar. 1. 15. Repent ye, and believe the Gospel. Aēt. 20. 21. Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, Repentance towards God, and Faith towards God our Lord Jesus Christ. Here we see that Faith and Repentance are what God requires from the Sinner.

Secondly, if these are wanting in him, he will be condemn'd; For this, see *Mar. 16. 16. He that believeth not shall be damned. Job 8. 24. Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your Sins. Luk 13. 3, 5. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Here we see, that where Faith and Repentance are wanting, the Sinner will be condemn'd

Thirdly, Faith and Repentance are such Qualifications in the Sinner, as God hath annex'd Pardon and Salvation to : For this, see *Mar 16. 16. He that believeth, and is baptiz'd, shall be saved. Job. 3. 16. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life. Chap. 20. 31. These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life thro' his Name. Luk. 24. 47. That Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name. Aēt. 2. 38. Repent and be baptized for the Remission of Sins. Aēt. 3. 19. Repent and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out. Chap. 11. 18. Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life. 2 Cor. 7. 10. Godly Sorrow worketh Repentance to Salvation, not to be repented of.*

Thus we see that Faith and Repentance are such Qualifications as God requires Sinners to put on; and that where these are wanting, the Sinner will be condemn'd; and that they are such Qualifications in the Sinner, as God has annex'd Pardon and Salvation to. From all which it is abundantly evident, that the believing penitent Sinner will be deliver'd from Condemnation. This being so,

I enquire, *Secondly*, whether Jesus Christ, the Son of God, doth obtain that Deliverance for him. This Enquiry is also answer'd in the Affirmative, for the Proof of which, I offer the following Testimonies, *Job. 3. 17. God sent not his Son into the World to condemn the World, but that the World thro' him might be saved. 1 Job. 4. 14. The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the World. 1 Thes. 1. 10. Whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus who deliver'd us from the wrath to come.* Here we see that the Sinners Deliverance from Condemnation is obtain'd by Jesus Christ. This being so,

I enquire, *Thirdly*, Whether That Deliverance is obtain'd by his Sufferings and Death. This Enquiry is likewise answer'd in the Affirmative; and is sufficiently proved by the following Testimonies, *Matt. 26. 28. This is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the Remission of Sins. Rom. 5. 9, 10. Much more now being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath thro' him: When we were Enemies we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son. Chap. 8. 34. Who is he that condemneth: it is Christ that died. 1 Cor. 15. 3. Christ died for our Sins according to the Scripture. Gal. 3. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a Tree. Eph 1. 17. In whom we have Redemption thro' his Blood; the forgiveness of Sins. 1 Tim. 2. 6. Who gave himself a Ransom for all. Heb. 9. 26. Once in the end of the World hath he appear'd to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself. 1 Pet. 3. 18. Christ hath once suffer'd for Sin, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God. Rev. 5. 9. For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood.* Thus we see from these Texts that the Sinners Deliverance from Condemnation, is obtain'd by the Sufferings and Death of Jesus Christ. Here I think it proper to observe, that tho'

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the Sinners Deliverance is ascribed to Christ's Sufferings and Death, yet it is not ascribed to them only, but also to his Resurrection and Intercession. As Rom. 4. 31. *Who was delivered for our Offences, and rais'd again for our Justification.* Chap. 5. 10. *If when we were Enemies we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his Life.* Chap. 8. 34. *Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again; — Who maketh Intercession for us.* Heb. 7. 25. *Wherefore he is able also to save to the uttermost those that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them.* Here we see that the Sinners Deliverance from Condemnation, hath as great a Dependence upon the prevailing Intercession of Christ, as it hath upon his Sufferings and Death; Consequently his Sufferings and Death do not alone obtain That Deliverance, but it is obtain'd by Christ's prevailing Intercession also. Having thus shewn that the Sinners Deliverance from Condemnation, is obtain'd by the Sufferings, Death, and Intercession of Christ,

I enquire, *Fourthly*, Whether his Sufferings and Death do in their own Nature and in the strict sense of the Word, *Merit* that Deliverance, and are a full and Equal Satisfaction to the Father, for the Sins and Offences of all believing penitent Sinners.

This Enquiry is two-fold.

First, Whether the Sufferings and Death of Christ do in their own Nature strictly and properly *Merit* that Deliverance. I have in my previous Observations shewn, that there is nothing which any one can do or suffer for the Sinner, which originally, and in the Nature of the thing, can *Merit* his Deliverance from Condemnation, or give a Right to claim a Discharge for him at God's hand: Consequently the Sufferings and Death of Christ do not in their own Nature and in this strict sense of the Word, *Merit* that Deliverance; And so the Enquiry is answer'd already.

dy. But because this is a Truth which the generality of Christians are (by Education, Custom, and Authority of others) strongly byass'd against, therefore I think it proper to add two or three Observations as a farther Proof of this Point. And accordingly I observe First, that what our Lord did and suffer'd, was in Obedience to his Fathers Will. Thus *Job. 4. 34. My Meat is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work.* Chap. 6. 38. *I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that sent me.* Matt. 26. 39. *He pray'd saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.* *Job. 18. 11. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy Sword into the Sheath; the Cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* Phil. 2. 8. *He became Obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross.* Heb. 5. 8. *Tho' he were a Son, yet learn'd he Obedience by the things which he suffer'd.* Chap. 10. 9. *Then said I, Lo, I come, to do thy Will, O God.* *Job. 10. 17, 18. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my Life, that I may take it again;—This Commandment have I received of my Father.* Here we see that what our Lord did and suffer'd, even unto Death, was in Obedience to his Fathers Will; Consequently, according to our Lord's own Rule, *Luk. 17. 10. He did not strictly and with regard to God, merit any thing by his Sufferings and Death at God's Hand; and therefore God could not be brought under any Obligation upon that account.*

I observe, Secondly, The Scriptures expressly declare that the Sinners Deliverance from Condemnation is the Effect of God's free Grace and Bounty. Now if it be free Bounty, then it will follow that Christs Sufferings and Death did not originally and in the nature of the thing, merit that Deliverance; because these two, Merit, and Grace, (in this Case) stand directly opposite one to the other. To be obtain'd by

Merit, and yet to be the Effect of Bounty and free Grace, is a direct Contradiction. That God doth exercise his Mercy and Grace in the Forgiveness of Sin, see *Matt. 6. 12. 14, 15. Forgive us our Debts* — *Your heavenly Father will also forgive you,* — *Neither will your Father forgive your Trespases.* *Mar. 11. 15. When ye stand praying, forgive, that your Father also which is in Heaven may forgive you your Trespases.* *Luk. 23. 34. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* *Act. 13. 38. Be it known unto you therefore, Men and Brethren, that thro' this Man is preached unto you the Forgiveness of Sins.* *Chap. 26. 18. To open their Eyes, and to turn them from Darkness unto Light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive Forgiveness of Sins.* *Eph. 4. 32. Even as God for Christs sake hath forgiven you.* *Col. 2. 13. You hath he quickned together with him, having forgiven you all Trespases.* *1 Joh. 1. 9. If we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins,* *Chap. 2. 12. I write unto you, little Children, because your Sins are forgiven you, for his Name sake.* *Rom. 3. 24. Being justified freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ.* *Eph. 2. 8. For by Grace ye are saved, and that not of your selves, it is the Gift of God.* Here we see, that notwithstanding all that Christ hath done and suffer'd for Sinners, yet the Sinner is justified or acquitted from Condemnation freely by God's Grace: It is the Gift of God: God's Mercy and Bounty is exercis'd in the forgiveness of Sins, which it could not be if the Sufferings and Death of Christ did originally and in their own Nature merit that Deliverance; for then God's discharging of the Sinner would be a Debt, which in Justice he was obliged to, and not an Act of Grace which he freely and bountifully bestowed upon his Creatures.

I observe, *Thirdly*, that there is a material difference betwixt a Debt properly so call'd, and Guilt properly so call'd. A Debt is an Obligation which we have been some way or other brought under

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der to another, which Obligation we are in strict Justice required to make good. Guilt is an irregular disorderly wicked Act, either of the Mind singly, or of the Mind and Practice in conjunction, by which we chuse to do what in Reason and Justice we ought not, or chuse to avoid what in Reason and Justice we ought to do. And as Debt is an Obligation which in strict Justice we are required to make good; so in many Cases we are capable of receiving Assistance from others to enable us to discharge our Debt, by enabling us to make good our Obligation; or we are capable of discharging our Debt in the Person of another, who may make good our Obligation in our stead. Thus, for example, if a Man should contract a Debt to his Neighbour of ten Pounds, to be paid to him at a certain time; if when the time comes he finds himself unable to discharge the Debt, because he has but half the Sum; if another Neighbour is pleas'd to give him five Pounds for that Purpose, in this Case he receives Assistance from another to make Satisfaction, by receiving an Ability in part to make good his Obligation. Thus again; if one Man should contract a Debt of Labour to another, and the Debtor should not perform that Labour in his own Person, but should employ some other who should perform it fully for him according to the Obligation: In this Case the Debtor would discharge his Debt in the Person of another, who would make good his Obligation in his stead. But with respect to *Guilt*, it is quite otherways; for as Guilt is an irregular wicked Act, which deserves a suitable Correction; so in the Nature of the thing there can be no other Satisfaction made, to take off the Guiltiness of that Act, than an actual personal Suffering of that Correction by the Actor: because as Guilt cannot be transposed from one Person to another, so if the Innocent should voluntarily take upon him to suffer Correction in the Guilty's stead, That Guilt would remain as much uncorrected as if the Person substituted had not been

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corrected at all; and consequently there is nothing which Christ could do or suffer, which originally in its own Nature could merit the Sinners Deliverance from Condemnation. Upon the whole, I think it abundantly evident, beyond all rational Contradiction, that the Sinners Deliverance from Condemnation was not merited by the Sufferings and Death of Christ, when we use the Word *merit* in the first and strictest Sense of that Term. Indeed we freely and thankfully own, that in a secondary and less proper sense, the Sufferings and Death of Christ merited the Sinners Deliverance from Condemnation; that is, the Obedience which Christ exercis'd, when he became obedient unto Death, was a rewardable Consideration with his Father, upon which he exalted him at his Right-hand, to be the Lord and Head of his People, and to be their prevailing Intercessor; and that he pardons the believing Penitent for Christs sake. But then this Benefit, with regard to Christ himself, is the Effect of God's freely accepting his Sufferings to that end; and with regard to the Sinner, it is a Reward merely of Grace, and not of Debt: It is what God's Bounty is pleas'd to bestow, and not what he is in strict Justice obliged to; which is the Case of *merit* (in the first and strictest sense of That Term.)

Secondly, I enquire, Whether the Sufferings and Death of Christ are a full and Equal Satisfaction to God for the Sins and Offences of all believing penitent Sinners. Before I return an Answer to this Enquiry, I premise that Equal Satisfaction is of two Kinds (*viz.*) first, such as is Equal to the Damage or Demerit of the Offence; and secondly such as is Equal to the Demand of the Damaged or Offended. Thus, for example, suppose that one Man should damage another to the value of ten Pounds; if the Damager makes Satisfaction to the value of ten Pounds, then this is Satisfaction of the first kind. But if the Damaged will be pleas'd to demand no more for his Sa-

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Satisfaction than the publick signing of an Instrument, as a Witness and Memorial of the Offenders acknowledging the Damage done, and of the free Grace and Bounty of the Offended in pardoning that Offence; when the Damager hath signed the aforesaid Instrument according to the full Intent and Meaning of the Offended, if the Offended is fully satisfied therewith, then this is Satisfaction of the second kind. And this latter is as full and equal as the former; for as the former is full and equal to the Damage or Demerit of the Offence, so the latter is full and equal to the Demand of the Damaged or Offended. This being premised, I answer, That the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, did by his Sufferings and Death make a full and Equal Satisfaction to his Father for the Sins and Offences of all believing penitent Sinners: But then I say, That this Satisfaction was not of the first, but of the second kind. That it was not of the first kind, I prove by this single (but conclusive Argument, *viz.*) the Fathers exercising his *Mercy* in the pardoning and forgiving of Sins. To exercise *Mercy* in the pardoning and forgiving an Offender, is to remit the Punishment in whole or in part, which is, due for the Offence: But if the Offender, or any other which is substituted to make Satisfaction in his stead, shall do or suffer that which is in the first and strict sense, a full and Equal Satisfaction to the Demerit of the Offence, then there is no room nor place for Pardon or Forgiveness to be exercis'd, because there is nothing to be pardon'd or forgiven. Yet That the Father doth exercise his *Mercy* and Grace in the Forgiveness of Sins, is what I have largely shewn already.

But then I say, *secondly*, That Christ did make a full and equal Satisfaction to the *Demand* of his Father, The Truth of which, will appear by what follows; (*viz.*) The Father did propose that his Son should thus suffer; and Christ voluntarily submitted unto
Death

Death to answer that Proposal: This I have proved already, when I shew'd that what Christ did and suffered, was in obedience to his Fathers Will. I farther say, The Father was so highly pleas'd, and so fully satisfied with Christs undertaking This Performance, that he hath thereupon appointed him to be an Intercessor for Sinners, and pardons the believing Penitent for his sake. For this see, Phil. 2. 8, 9. *He humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him.* Act. 5. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his Right hand.* Rom. 8. 34. *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the Right hand of God, who also maketh Intercession for us.* Heb. 7. 25. *Wherefore he is able also to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them.* Chap. 9. 24. *Christ is not entred into the Holy place made with hands, but into Heaven it self, now to appear in the presence of God for us.* Rom. 3. 24. *Being justified freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ.* Eph. 4. 32. *Forgiving one another, even as God for Christs sake hath forgiven you.* 1 Joh. 2. 1, 2. *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but also for the Sins of the whole World.* Ver. 12. *I write unto you, little Children, because your Sins are forgiven you for his Names sake.* Here we see that Christs Obedience unto Death was so highly acceptable, and so satisfactory to his Father, that he thereupon exalted him at his Right hand, to be a prevailing Intercessor for Sinners, and pardons the Believing Penitent upon his account, and for his sake; and consequently his Sufferings and Death were full and Equal to the Demand, and his Father was fully satisfied therewith.

Upon

Upon the whole, I think it plainly appears that the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, did by his Sufferings and Death make a full and Equal Satisfaction to his Father; full and Equal, not (in the strict sense) to the Damage or Demerit of the Offence, but to the Demand of the Damaged or Offended.

Objections with their Answers.

Object. 1. The Suffering and Death of Christ are Instrumental towards the Sinners Deliverance from Condemnation; But they could not be Instrumental towards that Deliverance any other ways than by Merit: Therefore they are so by Merit.

I answer; If there had been no other Way in which the Sufferings and Death of Christ could be Instrumental towards the delivering the Sinner from Condemnation, but only by their Meritoriousness, originally and in this strict sense, with regard to God; then I allow that the Objection would have had Strength in it: But this is so far from being true, that on the contrary, the Sufferings and Death of Christ are Instrumental towards the Delivering the Sinner from Condemnation, without this strict sense of Merit, Three several ways; The proving of which will be a sufficient Answer to this Objection.

First, I say, The Sufferings and Death of Christ are Instrumental toward the delivering the Sinner from Condemnation, as they are a Confirmation of the Truth of that Doctrine of Salvation which he preach'd, and appointed to be published to the World; and so are a proper and suitable Argument with the Sinner to believe the Truth of that Doctrine, and to return to God by Repentance, in doing of which he becomes a proper Object of God's pardoning Mercy.

As our Lord came into the World to proclaim the good Tidings, that God was graciously pleas'd to pardon and receive to Favour all believing penitent Sinners,

Sinners, so his Sufferings and Death had in them a two-fold Argument to convince People of the Truth of these Tidings; and consequently were an Instrumental Cause of that Faith and Repentance which disposed them for God's pardoning Mercy. First, they served to convince People that Christ was Sincere in his Pretensions; for when a Person makes a Declaration, that he is sent of God to declare his Will, and that what he reports is the Word or Mind of God; if that Person voluntarily and willingly submits to the greatest Hardships and Inconveniencies as to his worldly Interest, and readily seals his Doctrine with his Blood: This is the greatest Argument that can be used to satisfy us that he is honest and sincere in his Pretensions; and this being the Case of our Saviour, it will follow, that his Sufferings and Death have a natural tendency to bring Men to Faith and Repentance, and consequently to make them meet for God's Mercy. Secondly, when these Sufferings and Death are foretold plainly and fully with such Circumstances as none could know but God, and those to whom God should be pleas'd to reveal them; and that at such a time when there was no likelihood from the outward appearance of things that these Predictions should be fulfill'd, but rather the contrary, (which is the Case of our Saviour, who when he foretold his Sufferings and Death, and that on the third Day he should rise from the Dead, he was then in high Esteem among the Multitude, insomuch that when he went up to *Jerusalem*, where his Sufferings and Death were to take place, and just before that bloody Tragedy was acted, he was conducted along like some mighty Potentate, with Hosannah's and Songs of Praise, as in *Luk. 19. 37, 38.*;) I say, when things are thus plainly foretold, the fulfilling of these Predictions is the strongest Argument that can be produced to prove the Messenger to be sent of God; if the Message deliver'd appears to be worthy of God; all which

which is the present Case. From hence it appears that the Sufferings and Death of Christ are a double Argument with the Sinner to believe and obey the Gospel; Consequently those Sufferings and Death do Instrumentally effect and obtain the Sinners Deliverance from Condemnation, by working in them that Faith and Repentance which makes them the suitable and proper Objects of God's Mercy. Thus St Paul saith, *Tit. 2. 14. Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works.* Sinners whilst under the prevailing power of their Lusts are set forth in Scripture as Servants and Captives to Sin and Satan, *Rom. 6. 16, 17, 18. His Servants to whom ye obey, whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteousness. But God be thanked that ye were the Servants of Sin—Being then made free from Sin, &c. 2 Pet. 2. 19. They themselves are the Servants of Corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in Bondage. 2 Tim. 2. 26. That they may recover themselves out of the Snare of the Devil, who are taken Captive by him at his Will.* Now the Apostle in the foremention'd Text, *Tit. 2. 14.* tells us, *that Christ gave himself for us, that he might Redeem us from this Bondage, and purify us to Gods Service:* But here the word *Redeem* may not be understood in its original and proper sense, because Christ, was so far from paying any Price to Sin and Satan to whom we were in Bondage, that on the contray he took us as it were forcibly out of That Thralldom; and therefore the Term *Redeem* must be taken in a secondary and less proper sense; that he Redeem'd or so obtain'd our Deliverance from the aforesaid Bondage by his Sufferings and Death, as those Sufferings and Death, and the Promise of God's accepting our Repentance secured to us thereby, were a prevailing Argument with us to turn from our Sins, and turn to God; which is the same in

effect to us as if that Deliverance had been obtain'd for us by a Price properly so called. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. *Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold, from your vain Conversation received by Tradition from your Fathers, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish and without Spot.* As much as if the Apostle had said, Ye were not prevailed upon to leave your vain and wicked Course of Life, from any view or prospect of worldly Advantage (the main Argument which commonly influences Men in any Change,) but only from the Consideration of Christs bloody Sufferings and Death, and God's Promise thereupon of accepting our Repentance: Which Sufferings of Christ, as they are an Argument of his great Love to Sinners in laying down his precious Life in their Cause, so they are also a convincing Argument with them to believe the Truth of his Doctrine, and to turn from their Sins that they may be saved. That the word *Redeem* is not generally used in the Scriptures in the most proper, but in a less proper sense, see Deut. 7. 8. *The Lord brought you (the Children of Israel) out with a mighty hand, and Redeemed you out of the house of Bondmen; from the hand of Pharaoh King of Egypt.* The Lord is here said to *Redeem* the Israelites out of the House of Bondmen; and yet we know that he did not pay a Price to Pharaoh for their Deliverance, but on the contrary that he wrought that Deliverance by the many sore Judgments which he sent upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians: these Judgments being the only Argument with them to let the People go. Exo. 10. 7. *Pharaoh's Servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a Snare unto us? Let the men go that they may serve the Lord their God: Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed: Chap. 12. 30, 31, 33. Pharaoh rose up in the Night, he and his Servants, and all the Egyptians, and there was a great Cry in Egypt, for there was not an house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses* and

and Aaron by Night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from amongst my People, — and the Egyptians were urgent upon the People that they might send them out of the Land in haste; for they said, We be all dead Men. And thus God promised the Israelites, as in Exod 6. 6. I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the Burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their Bondage, and I will Redeem you with a stretched out Arm, and with great Judgments. Deu. 32. 6. Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish People, and unwise? Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? The word Bought in this place may not be understood properly, because that was not true in fact; for God did not pay to the Egyptians any Price, nor give them any valuable Consideration in Exchange for the Israelites Servitude; but on the contrary he forced their Deliverance from that Bondage, by a mighty Hand, and by a stretched out Arm, and Redeemed them by his Judgments (as I observ'd before.) 2 Sam. 7. 23. What one Nation in the Earth is like thy People, even like Israel, whom God went to Redeem for a People to himself — Before thy People which thou Redeem'dst to thee from Egypt, from the Nations and their Gods. Thus we see that the Israelites Redemption from Egyptian Thralldom was not effected by paying a Price or valuable Consideration for their Deliverance; but it was those Judgments which God inflicted upon Egypt which were a prevailing Argument with Pharaoh and the Egyptians to let the Children of Israel go.

Secondly, I say, The Sufferings and Death of Christ are Instrumental towards the delivering Sinners from Condemnation, as they were a noble Act of Obedience to his Fathers Will; which so recommended him to his Fathers Affection, that he hath thereupon exalted him at his Right hand to be a prevailing Intercessor for Sinners; and so the Sufferings and Death of Christ are an Argument with God to pardon the believing Penitent for Christs Sake.

That

That the Sufferings and Death of Christ were an Act of Obedience to his Fathers Will, is what we have proved already. That it recommended him to his Fathers Love, see *Job. 10. 17. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my Life, that I might take it again.* That it was the Ground of his Exaltation at God's Right hand, see *Phil. 2. 8, 9. He humbled himself and became Obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross; Wherefore (or because of this his unparallel'd Instance of Obedience) God also both highly exalted him.* *Heb. 12. 2. Who for the Joy that was set before him endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the Right hand of the Throne of God.* That he is a prevailing Intercessor for Sinners, see *Rom. 5. 10. If when we were Enemies we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his Life.* In this Verse the Apostle supposes, or takes it for granted, that the believing Romans were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, and then asserts by way of Inference, that they should be saved by Christs Life. Here I observe, that as the Apostle makes Reconciliation to God, and Salvation, two distinct things; the One past, and the Other to come; the One as effected by Christs Death, the Other by his Life: so he urges the Certainty of the former to prove the Certainty of the latter: *much more, being Reconciled, ye shall be Saved by his Life.* This being so, it may not be amiss to enquire what is the Apostles Meaning in this Text. In order to which I premise, that to be Enemies to God in the Language of the Scriptures, is to be Enemies to his Law and Government, by living in a State of Sin and Disobedience against him; And to be Reconciled to God, is to be Reconciled to our Duty, in turning to God by a true Repentance; to his Law as the Rule and Measure, and his Glory as the End of all our Actions. This *Rom. 8. 7. The carnal Mind is Enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God,*

God, neither indeed can be. Jam. 4. 4. *Ye Adulterers and Adulteresses, know ye not that the Friendship of this World is Enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a Friend of the World, he is the Enemy of God.* Col. 1. 21, 22. *You that were sometimes alienated and Enemies in your Mind by wicked Works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his Flesh, thro' Death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouable in his sight.* 2 Cor. 5. 20. *We are Ambassadors for Christ, as tho' God did beseech you by us; We pray you in Christs stead be ye reconciled unto God.* The great Business of the Apostles was to convince Men of their Danger whilst in a State of Sin, and (in Christs Name) to invite, beseech, and entreat them to come out of their sinful State, and return to their God and their Duty. And the great Argument they were to convince Sinners by, was the Consideration of the Son of God coming down from Heaven to publish the good Tidings that God would accept and pardon Sinners upon their return; that Christ died in the prosecution of this Design; that he rose from the Dead, and Ascended into Heaven; that his Death, or rather that the Obedience which he exercised in suffering and dying, was so valuable in God's sight, that he accepts of his Death as a Sacrifice of Atonement for the Sins of the World; that he accepts of Christs Mediation and Intercession in the behalf of Sinners, and pardons them for his Sake, and will give them a Place in his heavenly Kingdom: This being the Apostles Design, the praying Sinners to be reconciled to God, is no other than a praying them to repent, and turn to God, and bring forth fruits meet for Repentance. From hence it appears, that to be Enemies to God in the Language of the Scriptures, is to be Enemies to his Law and Government, by living in a State of Sin and Disobedience against him; and to be reconcil'd to God, is to be reconcil'd to our Duty, in turning to God by a true Repentance: to his Law as the Rule and Measure, and his Glory

as the End of all our Actions. This being premis'd, the foregoing Text *Rom. 5. 10.* may very justly be paraphras'd thus: If when we were in a State of Sin and Disobedience to God, and as such were Enemies to him, we were prevail'd upon from the Consideration of Christs Death, and of God's gracious Promises to Penitents thereupon, to come out of that sinful State, into a State of Holiness and Obedience; How much more, being brought home to God by his Son's Death, shall we be saved from Wrath thro' his prevailing Intercession for us: For if the consideration of Christs Death and of God's Promises thereupon to Penitents, was an Argument sufficient to turn us from our Sins to God; how much more, now we are turned, will that Death be an Argument sufficient with God to turn his Anger from us and procure our Pardon, when it is urged by his beloved Obedient Son, and our prevailing Intercessor. *Rom. 8. 34. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again; who is even at the Right hand of God, who also maketh Intercession for us. Heb 7. 25. Wherefore he is able also to save to the uttermost those that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for us. Chap. 9. 24. Christ is not entred into the holy Place made with hands—but into Heaven it self, now to appear in the presence of God for us.* Thus we see that as Christ is exalted at God's Right hand, so it is to appear in our behalf, and to make Intercession for us Sinners. And the Apostle declares, that such is the prevalence of his Intercession, that he is by this Means able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. That God was so well pleas'd with Christs performance as to pardon the believing Penitent for his Sake, see *Eph. 4. 32. Forgiving one another, even as God for Christs Sake, hath forgiven you.* As God's Example of pardoning Sinners is propounded to Sinners for their Imitation; so Sinners are pardoned upon Christs account, and for his Sake.

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Upon the whole I think it evidently appears, that the Sinners Deliverance from Condemnation, is effected and obtain'd by the Sufferings and Death of Christ, as those Sufferings and Death are an Argument with God to pardon the Sinner for Christ's sake. In like manner such was the Faith and Obedience of *Abraham* in attempting to offer *Isaac* his Son at God's Command; and it was so highly acceptable in God's sight, that God shewed kindness to his Posterity for his sake. *Rom. 11. 28. As concerning the Gospel, they are Enemies for your sake; but as touching the Election, they are beloved for their Fathers (Abraham, &c.) sakes.* And thus God blessed the House of *Potiphar* for *Joseph's* sake, as in *Gen. 39. 5.* Also *David's* vertue so recommended him to God's Favour, that he in Mercy spared his Children for his sake, as in *1 King. 11. 12. Nevertheless in thy Days I will not do it, for thy Father David's sake.* Chap. 15. 4. *Nevertheless for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a Lamp in Jerusalem.* 2 *King. 8. 19. Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David his Servant's sake.* And thus also God is pleas'd in Mercy to pardon the Penitent for his Son Christ *Jesus's* Sake, as in *1 Job. 2. 12. I write unto you, little Children, because your Sins are forgiven you for his (Christ's) Names sake.*

Thirdly, I say, The Sufferings and Death of Christ are Instrumental towards the delivering Sinners from Condemnation, as they were a Sacrifice of Atonement of God's own appointment; and so are at once a Sign and Pledge of the Sinner's Repentance, and God's Forgiveness.

As all Sin is chiefly and primarily committed against God, and as God is at liberty to pardon or punish the Sinner as he sees good; so when he has been pleas'd to come to an accommodation with his sinful Creatures, he has been pleas'd upon some Occasions to appoint that a Sacrifice of Atonement should be offer'd up to him; to be a publick Sign and Pledge

of his Creatures Repentance, and of his Forgiveness: Not that the Sacrifice of Atonement when offer'd did in its own Nature merit this Mercy, consider'd as such a Sacrifice; (because there is nothing which any one can do or suffer which can repair the Damage done by Sin, nor that can be any way, or upon any account profitable unto God; and consequently he can never in strict Justice be brought under any Obligation to his Creatures from any thing which can be done or suffer'd by them, or for them:) But tho' such a Sacrifice does not in its own Nature merit a Discharge, yet it becomes necessary to the obtaining of that Discharge, when God hath appointed and required it to that End. And when it is thus offer'd, and the Sinner is pardon'd, he is said to obtain his Pardon by it, because it could not be obtain'd without it. This Sacrifice of Atonement, I say, was a Sign and Pledge of the Sinners Repentance, and God's Forgiveness: And as the Sinners Offering under the Law was to be without Blemish, and perfect in its kind; this was a Representation and an Acknowledgment of what the Offerer ought to have been for the time past, and of what he is resolv'd to be for the time to come. His bringing, his killing (or the Priest killing in his stead,) and pouring out the Blood thereof, and offering it up to God, was a lively Representation of his being convinced of the Evil of his Ways, and of what he deserv'd, and might justly expect at God's hand, and of his throwing himself at the Footstool of God's Mercy. And as God had promised Pardon to the Penitent; so the offering of this Sacrifice, according to God's Ordinance, was a Sign and Pledge that God would in Mercy fulfill his Promise in the forgiveness of his Sins. Thus, *Lev. 4. 31. The Priest shall burn it upon the Altar for a sweet savour unto the Lord; and the Priest shall make an Atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him. 2 Sam. 24. 18, 25. And God came* that

that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an Altar unto the Lord in the Threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. — And David built there an Altar unto the Lord, and offer'd Burnt-offerings and Peace-offerings: So the Lord was intreated for the Land, and the Plague was stay'd from Israel. 2 Chron. 29. 24. And the Priests killed them, and they made Reconciliation with their Blood upon the Altar, to make Atonement for all Israel. So in like manner it was the good pleasure of God to appoint his Son to make up the Breach which Sin had made betwixt him and Mankind. And for the effecting of this Work, he appointed that Christ should require Men to turn from their Sins by Repentance, that he should promise them Pardon upon that Repentance; and that he should offer up himself as a Sacrifice of Atonement for the Sins of the World, by submitting to that painful and shameful Death of the Cross, which he foreknew the wicked Jews would bring him to. All this, Christ willingly and readily did in Obedience to the Will of his Father; which so recommended him to his Father's Love, as that he hath, as a Reward for that Undertaking, exalted him at his Right hand, and made him to be the Head and Lord of his People, to rule them here, and judge them hereafter; and he accepts of his Mediation and Intercession for Sinners, and pardons the believing Penitent for his Sake. Thus, Rom. 5. 11. *We also joy in God, thro' our Lord Christ, by whom we have now received the Atonement.* Heb. 7. 26 — 28. *For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners, and made higher than the Heavens; who needed not daily, as those High Priests, to offer up Sacrifice, first for his own Sins, and then for the Peoples; for this he did once, when he offered up himself: For the Law maketh men high Priests which have Infirmities; but the Word of the Oath, which was since the Law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.* Chap. 9. 11, 12. But

Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, Not of this Building, neither by the Blood of Goats and Calves, but by his own Blood he entred in once into the holy Place, having obtain'd eternal Redemption for us. Ver. 26, 28. But now once in the End of the World hath he appear'd to put away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself,— So Christ was once offer'd to bear the Sins of many. Chap. 10. 10, &c. By the which Will we are sanctified thro' the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ, once for all.— But this man after he had offer'd one Sacrifice for Sins, for ever sat down at the Right hand of God.— Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest, by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living Way, which he hath consecrated for us, thro' the Vail, that is to say his Flesh. And having an High Priest over the house of God, &c. Chap. 12. 24. And to Jesus the Mediatour of the New Covenant; and to the Blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel. 1 Joh. 1. 7. The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin. Thus we see, that our Lord Jesus Christ, as our great High Priest, hath once offer'd up himself to God, as a Sacrifice of Atonement or Peace-offering for the Sins of Mankind; and so hath open'd a way by his Doctrine, Death, and Intercession, for Sinners to have a Share and Fellowship in God's pardoning Mercy, and an Inheritance in his heavenly Kingdom. And as the Sacrifices of Atonement which were offer'd under the Law, were not design'd in their Institution that they should be paid to God as a valuable Consideration for the Breach of his Law, (that being a thing impossible in the Nature thereof, Heb. 10. 4. but only to be a Sign, and a Memorial of Peace and Reconciliation betwixt God and his Creatures, by representing at one view the Sinners Repentance and God's Forgiveness :) So in like manner, the Sufferings and Death of Christ were not design'd to be paid to God

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as being originally in the Nature of the thing a Price, or Consideration for the Sins and Offences of Mankind, upon the payment of which God would be obliged in strict Justice to discharge them; but they were to be a Sign, a Memorial, a Seal, and Confirmation of that Covenant of Grace and Mercy, Life and Peace, which God was pleas'd to enter into with Mankind; of which Covenant, Christ was made the Minister and Mediatour. And as Christ (like the Sacrifices under the Law) was without Blemish, and without Spot, this was a Representation of what Man ought to have been for the time past, and of what he is resolv'd to endeavour to be for the time to come. And as Christ died a painful and shameful Death upon the Cross; so this is a lively Representation of what the Sinner didmost justly deserve. And as this was appointed of God to be a Sin-offering, or Sacrifice of Atonement for Sin; so it is a Pledge and Confirmation of God's gracious Promise of forgiving the Penitent; and therefore it is called, The Blood of the Covenant, and the Blood of the New Testament; that is, the Blood by which the New Testament or Covenant was establish'd and confirm'd; Matt. 26. 28. *This is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the Remission of Sins.* Heb. 10. 29. *Of how much sorer Punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath troden under foot the Son of God, and counted the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an Unholy thing.*

Thus I think it evidently appears, that tho' the Sufferings and Death of Christ did not in their own Nature originally and in the strict Sense of the word, *Merit* the Sinner's Deliverance from Condemnation; yet That Deliverance was obtain'd by his Sufferings and Death; first, as they were a Confirmation of the Truth of that Doctrine of Salvation which Christ preach'd; and so are a prevailing Argument with the Sinner to turn to God by Repentance, by which he becomes a suitable Object of God's Mercy.

Mercy. Secondly, As they were such an Act of Obedience, as recommended him to his Father's Affection, and were the ground of his Exaltation at God's Right hand, to be a prevailing Intercessor for Sinners; and so are an Argument with God to pardon the believing Penitent for Christ's sake. And Thirdly, as they were a Peace-offering, or Sacrifice of Atonement for Sin, of God's own appointing; and so are a Sign and Pledge of the Sinners Repentance and God's Forgiveness.

Object. 2. St Paul saith, 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. *Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a Price; therefore glorify God in your Bodies and in your Spirits, which are God's.* Chap. 7. 23. *Ye are bought with a Price; be not ye the Servants of Men.* 1 Tim. 2. 6. *Who (viz. Christ) gave himself a Ransom for all.* And our Lord saith, Mat. 20. 28. *Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his Life a Ransom for many.* Here we see that the Sinner is not only Ransom'd by Christ's Death, but also that he is Ransom'd by a Price; Consequently the Sufferings and Death of Christ were strictly a Price or valuable Consideration paid to God for the Breach of his Law; and that the Sinners Deliverance from Condemnation was in the proper and literal Sense merited by them.

I answer: God said to Israel, Isai 43. 3. *I gave Egypt for thy Ransom.* But Egypt was not given as a Price or valuable Consideration in exchange for the Israelites Service, because it was Egypt they were in bondage to; but God gave Egypt for their Ransom by giving it to Destruction, and so wrought Israel's Deliverance from the Egyptian Bondage by that means. So in like manner Christ gave his Life a Ransom for many, not in buying the Sinners off from Punishment by paying (in the strict and most proper Sense) what was originally in the nature of the thing a Price or valuable Consideration for their Discharge; no,

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God discharges them freely, forgiving them all Trespases, Rom. 3. 24. Being justified freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Col. 2. 13. You being dead in your Sins, and the Uncircumcision of your Flesh, hath he quickned together with him, having forgiven you all Trespases. But Christ redeem'd or bought their Subjection to his Kingdom and Government, in laying down his Life to prosecute their Welfare; and his Death was as a Ransom for them, as it was an Argument with God to pardon them, and with them to shake off their Subjection to Sin and Satan, and to become the Lord's free Men. They were not bought of God by a Price that was paid to him (in the most proper Sense,) but they were bought or Merited to his Service by his Mercies, and in particular by Christ's Blood, which was shed in their Cause and for their Sakes; And therefore the Church in Heaven thought him worthy of their Praise and Thanksgiving upon this Account, Rev. 5. 9. They sung a new Song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast Redeem'd us to God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation. Here we see, that the ground of their Thankfulness was not their being bought of God by Christ's Blood, but their being bought or redeem'd to God by his Blood, as by his Sufferings and Death he had merited their Service, and prevail'd with God to pardon them, and with Them to shake off the heavy Yoke of Sin, and yield up themselves to Gods Service.

Object. 3. If the Sufferings and Death of Christ did not in the strict and proper Sense, merit or buy off the Sinner from Condemnation, but he is pardon'd freely by God's Grace; then it will follow, that the Sufferings and Death of Christ are of no more Advantage to Sinners, than the Sufferings and Deaths of the Apostles, or of any other Martyrs.

I answer ; As the rendering to all their Due, is a general Rule or Law of Equity to all Men, so I think it the Duty of every Christian to render to All their Due in the present Case. The Supreme God, the Father, is the prime Mover ; Christ is the prime Instrument , and the Apostles and Martyrs are under Him subordinate Instruments in that great Work of Mans Salvation. Gods Love was the first moving Cause which set all the other Causes a going, *Job. 3. 16, 17.* *God so loved the World, that he gave his Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life ; for God sent not his Son into the World to condemn the World, but that the World thro' him might be saved.* Chap. 12. 49. *I have not spoken of my self, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a Commandment what I should say, and what I should speak.* Christ is the prime Instrument, as he is the Fathers prime Minister to reveal his Will concerning us ; as his Sufferings Death and Resurrection are the principal Confirmation of the Truth of his Doctrine, and so are the principal Argument with the Sinners to turn from their Sin, that they might be saved ; as his Obedience in Life and Death was the ground of his Headship over the Church, of his Mediation and Intercessorship with his Father for Sinners, and of his Fathers pardoning Sinners for his Sake ; and as his Death was (by Gods appointment) a Sacrifice of Atonement for the Sins and Offences of Mankind. Thus Christ was the main and principal Instrument of Mans Salvation ; and therefore he is by way of Eminence called, *Our Saviour*. The Apostles, and Martyrs, and all that are any ways employ'd in promoting the Salvation of Mankind, are under Him subordinate Instruments in the Work of Salvation, some in a greater and some in a lesser Degree. Christ is the Captain or chief Leader in this Work, *Heb. 2. 10.* And he is the Corner-stone in this Building ; and every one that sets a hand to it, is a part thereof,

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thereof, and will, if he be found faithful, be a Sharer in the Reward. 1 Cor. 3. 9. *We are Labourers together with God; ye are God's Husbandry, ye are God's Building.* 2 Cor. 6. 1. *We then as Workers together with him, beseech you that ye receive not the Grace of God in vain.* Eph. 2. 20. *And are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone.* 1 Cor. 7. 16. *For what knowest thou, O Wife, whether thou shalt save thy Husband? Or how knowest thou, O Man, whether thou shalt save thy Wife;* 1 Tim. 4. 16. *For in doing this thou shalt save thy self and them that hear thee.* Jam. 5. 20. *Let him know that he which converteth the Sinner from the Error of his ways, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall cover a Multitude of Sins.* Here we see that every One which sets forward the Salvation of Sinners is a subordinate Instrument in the Work of Salvation; Consequently he that lays down his Life for the Profession and Practice of the pure Gospel, is an Instrument in the Work of Salvation, to a much greater Degree than many others are, because he adds (as it were) to the Argument for the Truth of the Christian Religion. But yet tho' such an One is a great Instrument in this Work, and his Death is a great Benefit to Mankind, yet it falls vastly short, and bears no manner of Comparison with that unspeakably greater Benefit which Sinners reap by the Sufferings and Death of Christ, who is the prime Instrument in Man's Salvation. Christ's Sufferings, Death and Resurrection, are the grand Argument for the Truth of his Gospel: They are the foundation of all the Benefits we receive by his Mediation and Intercession, and of God's pardoning us upon his Account: And 'tis His Death only, that was appointed of God to be a *Sacrifice of Atonement* for the Sins of Mankind.

Object. 4. If the foregoing Account of Salvation by Christ is true, then those that liv'd before Christ's

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time could have no Benefit by his Death, because his Death could not be an Argument with, or have any Influence on them, to turn from their Sins, that they might be saved.

I answer; Tho' the Sufferings and Death of Christ could not be an Argument with such to repent and turn to God, yet notwithstanding they may be Sharers in the Benefits of it; because the Death of Christ could be as well a Sacrifice of Atonement for the Sins of those that lived before him, as those that lived after him in this World; and because the Benefits of his Intercessorship, the Ground and Cause of which was his Obedience, in doing and suffering unto Death, may extend as well to those that were before him as after him: And upon this Account Christ might be said to be a *Lamb slain from the foundation of the World*, as in *Rev. 13. 8.*

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ENQUIRY

CONCERNING THE
Justice of GOD:

In which is Consider'd,

Whether Humane Understanding may examine and judge of the Moral Attributes of GOD; and of what is agreeable or disagreeable to these, as they are in Him, without being guilty of Presumption, or any other Crime.

WITH AN
APPENDIX,

CONCERNING

Infinite Justice, and Infinite Satisfaction.

Psal. 89. 14. *Justice and Judgment are the Habitation of thy Throns (O Lord:) Mercy and Truth shall go before thy Face.*

Printed in the Year 1718.

ENQUIRY

CONCERNING THE

Justice of GOD:

In which is Considered,

Whether Humane Understanding may
conceive and judge of the Moral Attributes
of GOD: and whether it be reasonable or dis-
agreeable to the Light of Reason, that
our being guilty of any Crime,



WITH AN

APPENDIX

CONCERNING

Infant Justice, and Infant Satisfaction.

THE SECOND PART, containing an Account of the
Moral Attributes of GOD, and of the
Moral Attributes of Man.

Printed in the Year 1716.

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Concerning the

Justice of GOD, &c.

THIS Enquiry is Three-fold ; *First*, what Justice is ; *Secondly*, What Rules must be observ'd by those that minister it ; and *Thirdly*, Whether God is a Just Being : After which, are Objections with their Answers.

First, What Justice is.

Justice is the Ballance of common Equity, by which is weighed out or dispenced Good and Evil, in an equal Proportion to the Merit or Demerit of Things, or to any other Right of Claim that one Being hath upon Another : I say, To any Other Right of Claim ; because there may be a Right of Claim without Merit, as in the Case of free Promises : For when one Person makes a Promise to another, to give him some good thing, free and unconditional, he doth by that Act confer on him, not only a Right to claim and expect, but also of receiving and enjoying the good thing promised to him. And tho' the making of that Promise, may only be an act of Bounty, because it is free and unconditional ; yet the keeping of that Promise, is an act of Justice, because
the

the Benefactor is not free and at liberty after such Promise is made.

Again, Justice is a Mean in the Ministration of Good, between Bounty and Fraud; the Ballance of Justice standing upon such an even Poize, as that if it turn to one side it is Bounty, if to the other it is Fraud.

Again, Justice is a Mean in the Ministration of Evil, between Mercy and Cruelty; the Ballance of Justice standing upon such an even Poize, as that if it turn to one side it is Mercy, if to the other it is Cruelty.

Secondly, What Rules must be observ'd by those that minister Justice.

In order to minister Justice according to the Laws of common Equity, every Ministrator must have regard to Every just Claim, so as that All may have their Due. And here it is to be noted, that by the Laws of common Equity, every one has a Right to dispose of his own peculiar Property according to his own Will; otherways the Notion of Property is destroy'd, or at least the having a Propriety in any thing cannot be a Privilege; for all the Advantage arising from Property, consists in this; that the Proprietor is free and uncontrollable in the using, enjoying, and disposing of his own Property; and is under no obligation, nor accountable to any, for the using, enjoying, or disposing of the same. But tho' every one may dispose of his own Property according to his own Will, yet he has no Right to dispose of the Property of another; Therefore in the Ministration of Justice, two Rules must be kept, according to the two different Capacities the Ministrator may act in.

The first Rule, is to be observ'd by him who hath no Right or Property concern'd in the Ministration, but only acts by appointment, as an indifferent Person.

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son. The Rule is; He must keep the Ballance of Justice upon an even Poize, not varying a tittle on either side, whether in the Ministration of Good or Evil; but each Parties Right must equally be regarded; for if either Party is wrong'd, it becomes an Act of criminal Injustice in the Ministrator.

The second Rule, is to be observ'd by him who acts as a Party concern'd in the Ministration, and whose own Property or Right is as much concern'd as the Right and Property of him to whom Justice is Ministered. The Rule is; He must have a strict regard to the Right of him to whom Justice is ministered, so as not to break in upon it in the least Degree: If he minister Evil, not to exceed the Demerit of the Crime; if Good, not to come short of the Merit of the thing rewarded; for in both Cases there is just ground of Complaint, and the Ministrator becomes guilty of criminal Injustice. But in regard of his own Right, he is left free, to exercise either Bounty, in rewarding beyond the Merit; or Mercy, in punishing less than the Demerit of the thing: And if this is unjust, as indeed strictly speaking it is; yet we conceive it is not Criminal; yea, it would be so far from being a Crime, that on the contrary it would be excellent and glorious, if the Object be proper and suitable for that Bounty or Mercy to be exercised upon.

Thirdly, Whether God is a Just Being.

This is Answer'd in the Affirmative.

The Argument for it, is taken from God's Goodness, and stands thus: If God is a Good Being, then God is Just; But God is a Good Being; Therefore God is Just. That God is Good, is here taken for granted, as being allow'd by all Christians. And that his Goodness proves him to be Just, appears by what follows.

Justice

Justice is a Negative Vertue ; and when we say that God is Just, we only say what he is not, namely, That he is not criminally Unjust. Here it is to be noted, that in the exercising of Justice, God stands in the Capacity of a Party concern'd ; That is, God's Right and Property is as much concern'd in that Ministration, as the Right and Property of him to whom Justice is ministr'd : And in this Capacity he only stands engaged by the Laws of common Equity to have regard to the Right of him to whom Justice is ministr'd, so as not to inflict more Evil than the Demerit of the Crime, nor communicate less Good than the Receiver has a Title to by a just Right of Claim. As to his own Property, I say as before, That he is left free by the Laws of common Equity to dispose of it as he will ; so as that he may communicate Good, either without or beyond Merit, which we call Bounty ; or he may remit or punish less than the Crime deserves, which we call Mercy ; without being criminally Unjust ; Nay, it is so far from being a Crime, that it is noble and glorious, when the Object is proper and suitable for that Bounty or Mercy to be exercised upon. This being so, I say, that criminal Injustice is inconsistent with God's Goodness. For, That innate Goodness which dwells in God, is a Bar to all Fraud and Cruelty : And God is so far from exercising Fraud in withholding that Good which another has a Right to claim from him, that he is rather disposed by his Goodness to confer that Good which they have no Right to, if the Object be proper and suitable to receive it ; That is, in other Words, Bounty is a Consequence of his Goodness, but Fraud is directly opposite to it. Again, God is so far from exercising Cruelty in punishing beyond the Demerit of the Crime, that he is rather disposed by his Goodness to exercise Mercy in punishing less than the Crime deserves, if the Object be proper and suitable for that Mercy to be exercis'd upon ;

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upon; That is, in other Words, Mercy is a Consequence of his Goodness, whereas Cruelty is opposite to it. From hence it appears that God is a Just Being.

Objections with their Answers.

Object. 1. May not God, for the glorifying of his Power, make Creatures to be miserable without Demerit, and yet act according to the Principles of Justice, for as much as the Laws of Equity or Justice leaves every Being free to dispose of his own Property as he will? Seeing therefore God's Creatures are his own, he may do what he will with them, without being chargeable with criminal Injustice.

Answ. Tho' they are his own, and receive their Being from him, yet we conceive it would be still criminal Injustice in him to give them Being for no other End, with respect to the Creatures, but to make them miserable; because every Being has a Right from common Equity to claim a continuance in its present State, when its Change will add to, or give Being to its Misery, except its Demerit cuts off that Claim. Therefore, I say, that Non-entity has a Right (if we may so speak) to continue so, when it's receiving Existence serves only to make it miserable; and it would be an act of criminal Injustice to Non-entity, to give it Existence to that End; because Non-entity is better, and rather to be chosen than a State of Misery. And farther, I say, God will never glorify his Power at the Expence of his Justice and Goodness, when he can do it a thousand ways consistent with both.

Object. 2. We see that the sensible Creatures below us are capable of Misery, and do really suffer it, and yet have no Demerit.

Answ. As they receive Evil, so they receive Good from God's hand; and as we cannot know the Mea-

sure of the Evil they suffer, so neither can we know the Measure of the Good they enjoy: So that, for all we know, the Good they receive is more than an Equivalent to, and Compensation for the Evil they suffer. So again we cannot know whether they are without Demerit; for as they have inferior Capacities, and as they (seeming to us) have a freedom in the Use and Exercise of them, so they may, for ought we know, contract an inferior Guilt, in proportion to their inferior Capacities. Upon the whole, I say, seeing we are wholly ignorant of their Case, we cannot determine ought concerning them, and therefore the Objection is of no force.

Object. 3. Doth not the unequal Distribution of Providence, as to Good and Evil, with respect to Good and Bad Men, seem to imply an Unjust Hand in that Distribution, seeing it often happens that Bad Men enjoy the Good, and Good Men the Evil of Life?

Answer. As to Good Men, That lesser measure of Good which they enjoy, is all Bounty, because they have no Merit; and That greater measure of Evil which they suffer, is still Mercy, because it is less than their Demerit: So then there is no criminal Injustice with respect to Good Men. And as to Bad Men, I say, that the greater Good they enjoy is God's Bounty; and forasmuch as none are wrong'd by that Ministration, seeing God gives his own and not another's Goods, there can be no criminal Injustice in that Administration. As to the lesser Evil which they suffer, That is God's Mercy; and forasmuch as none are wrong'd in the exercise of that Mercy, it cannot be criminally Unjust in God to exercise it.

Object. 4. God being in himself Incomprehensible, and his Ways Unsearchable, Who dares presume to say what he can, or cannot do? Or what is agreeable

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able or disagreeable to his Perfections, seeing his Ways are in the Deep, and his Paths in the great Waters, and his Foot-steps are not known? Tho' We may state the Notion of Justice, Goodness, Truth, Holiness, and the like, and of what is agreeable or disagreeable to these, with relation to our selves; yet who can state the Notion of them, or be capable of judging when things are agreeable or disagreeable to these in God? To pretend to do this, is Presumptuous; 'tis looking into inaccessible Light, and measuring the Ways of God by the finite Line of Humane Understanding.

Ans. (First,) That God is in himself Incomprehensible, and that the Way of his Providence is a great Deep, which the Line of Humane Understanding (at present) doth not fathom, I readily grant: But then, I say, as in *Psal.* 97, 2. That, as Clouds and Darkness are round about him, which is the Foundation of our Astonishment; so Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne, which is the Foundation of our Comfort. And therefore if there are some things in the Way of his Providence which seem to clash, or to be contrary to those Divine Perfections which the Light of Nature hath sufficiently demonstrated, or Divine Revelation hath fully revealed to be in God; this doth not arise from such a real clashing, but from the shortness of our Understanding, which cannot see thro', nor to the End of things: So that God is True, tho' every Man be a Liar: He is really Good, Just, Holy, &c. and he cannot (or rather he never will) act contrary to these.

I answer (Secondly,) That tho' God is Incomprehensible in himself, yet we may form a Conception of what he is, as he stands related unto Us. Tho' we cannot form a Conception of what the Nature or Substance of God is, (if I may so speak,) yet we may and can, form a Conception of him, that he is a Wise, Powerful, Just, Good Being, and the like;

because he hath abundantly demonstrated himself to Humane Understanding to be such ; and therefore Humane Understanding may (without Presumption,) and ought to form a Conception of these, and of what is agreeable or disagreeable to these in God ; The Truth of which, will abundantly appear from the following Considerations.

First ; If Humane Understanding cannot form a Conception of Goodness, Justice, Truth, Holiness, and the like ; and of what is agreeable or disagreeable to these, as they are in God ; then vain and fruitless are all those Discoveries which God hath made of himself by Revelation. He hath reveal'd himself to be a Holy God, *Lev. 19. 2.* But if we may not be allow'd to judge what Holiness is when applied to God, and what is agreeable or disagreeable to it, then such a Revelation is of no manner of use to us. If the Lord hath declared himself to be, *The Lord God, Merciful, Gracious, Long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, as in Exod. 34. 6 ;* To what End can this serve, if we may not be allow'd to judge what Mercifulness and Graciousness are, when applied to God ; and what is agreeable or disagreeable to these ? Surely all such Revelations are useless and vain, if they are above the reach of Humane Understanding, or if it would be Presumption to discern and judge what is intended by them.

Secondly ; God is the proper Object of our Affections ; and it is not only our Duty, but also our Happiness to fear him, to love him, to delight in him, &c. Now whatever makes him to be the Object of our Affections, must be such things in him as we do actually apprehend, and can form a Conception of, and of what is agreeable or disagreeable to them. It must be something which we have an actual Conception of, which must excite and raise these Affections in us. We must conceive God to be a Holy and Powerful Being, and likewise what is agreeable or dis-

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disagreeable to these in him, or else we could not make him the Object of our Fear. We must form a Conception of the Goodness of God, and of his being so to us, and of what is agreeable or disagreeable to it, as it is in God; or else we cannot make him the Object of our Love.

Thirdly; God is propounded to us as the Object of our Imitation. Thus St Paul, *Eph. 5, 1*, saith, *Be ye followers of God, as dear Children*. And our Lord, *Luk. 6, 36*, saith, *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful*. And St Peter, *1 Pet. 15, 16*, saith, *As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of Conversation, because it is written, (Lev. 11. 44. and 19. 2.) Be ye holy, for I am holy*. Now if we may not be allow'd to judge, or form a Conception of, what Mercifulness, Holiness, and the like are when applied to God, and what is agreeable or disagreeable to these; then we can never make these, as they are in God, the Object of our Imitation, which we are expressly requir'd in the Scriptures to do.

Fourthly; It hath been the practice of the best and wisest Men, in all Ages, to judge or form a Conception of what Justice, Truth, Holiness, and the like are, and what is agreeable or disagreeable to these, as they are in God. Thus Abraham, *Gen. 18. 23, 25*, saith, *Wilt thou also destroy the Righteous with the Wicked? — that the Righteous should be as the Wicked; that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do Right?* Here we see plainly what Conception Abraham had of Justice and Equity, as consider'd in God, and of what is agreeable or disagreeable to it. *Deu. 7. 9*. *Know therefore, that the Lord, thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth Covenant and Mercy with them that love him and keep his Commandments, to a thousand Generations*. Again, *Plal. 11. 8*. *The Righteous Lord loveth Righteousness: His Countenance will behold the thing that is just*. *Jer. 9. 24*. *But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me; that I am the Lord* which

which exerciseth Loving-kindness, Judgment and Righteousness in the Earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord. Here we see, that it is the proper ground of a Man's Glorifying, that he is capable of discerning and judging what Loving-kindness, Judgment, and Justice are when applied to God, and what is agreeable or disagreeable to these. *Heb. 6. 10. God is not unrighteous, to forget your Work and Labour of Love.* God hath promised by the Mouth of his Son, *Mar. 9. 41. That he that did give a Cup of Water to a Disciple to drink in Christ's Name, because he belong'd to him, he should not lose his Reward.* And the Apostle, referring to this Promise, assures the believing *Hebrews* for their Comfort, and to encourage them to persevere in their Duty, that God was not Unrighteous (which otherways the Apostle supposes he would be) in that he did not forget to fulfil his Promise, in rewarding their Work and Labour of Love, which they had shewed towards his Name, in that they had ministred to the Saints, and did continue so to do. Finally, the strength of *St Paul's* Reasoning with the *Hebrews*, *Chap. 6, ver. 17, 18.* depends wholly upon this, that they had a Liberty, and could discern and judge what Truth and Faithfulness are as consider'd in God, and what is agreeable or disagreeable to these; for, without the allowing of this, his Reasoning is of no force: For thus he there expresses himself; *God willing more abundantly to shew unto the Heirs of Salvation the Immutability of his Counsels, confirm'd it by an Oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might have a strong Consolation who have fled for Refuge, to lay hold of the Hope set before us.* Here *St. Paul* asserts, That the Oath, and Promise, of God, were two immutable Things, in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might have a strong Consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold of the Hope set before us. Here *St. Paul* asserts, That the Oath and Promise of God,

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were two immutable things, in which it was impossible that God should lye. And this Impossibility of God's proving false to his Promise, or to his Oath, he makes the ground of their Faith, Hope, and Comfort; which it could not be, if they could not, or if it were Presumption in them to judge what Truth and Faithfulness are, when applied to God, and of what is agreeable or disagreeable to these.

Fifthly, and *lastly*, it pleas'd God so far to condescend, as to appeal to the Reason of Mankind, and to call upon them to judge of the Justice and Equity of his Dealings with them: Thus, *Isai. 5. 3. O Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and Men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my Vineyard. Ezek. 18. 25. O house of Israel, is not my way Equal? are not your ways Unequal?*

Thus I think it sufficiently appears, that we may not only form a Conception of what God is, as he stands related unto us, without being guilty of Presumption; but also that it is both our Duty, and our Glory so to do.

If it should be here replied, That the Scriptures give us a Relation of many things that God said and did, which, if brought to the Bar of Man's Judgment, and there tried by the Standard of Humane Reason, will appear to be contradictory to Truth and Justice: Thus, *1 Sam. 2. 30. I said indeed, that thy House, and the House of thy Fathers should walk before me for ever; But now the Lord saith, Be it far from me.* Here we have an Acknowledgement of the Promise made to *Phineas*, as in *Num. 25. 13*; And likewise a declar'd Resolution to break that Promise, contrary to the Rules of Truth and Justice. Again, *2 King. 8. 10. And Elisha said unto him (Hazael,) Go say unto him, (Benhadad King of Syria,) Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit, the Lord hath shewed me, that he shall surely dye.* Here we have two things asserted; which

which contradict each the other. Again, in the 89th *Psalms* we have in one part of it a large Account of the Promises of God to *David*, and his Posterity; and in another part of that *Psalms*, is set forth the Non-performance of those Promises, which is an Impeachment of the Truth and Justice of God. Again, *Isa.* 38. 1. The Prophet tells *Hezekiah*, that he shall die, and not live; and then at ver. 5. he tells him, that he should live fifteen Years longer; which makes the first Declaration to be a falshood. Again, *Jer.* 15. 18. Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a Liar, and as Waters that fail? Chap. 20. 7. O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived. Here the Prophet *Jeremiah* charges God with Deceit. Again, *Jonah* 3. 4. Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed; And yet we find that this Prediction fail'd. These, and the like things, when tried by the Standard of Human Reason, will make God a Liar, Unjust, and the like.

I Answer. The seeming Contradictoriness of these or any other such, to Truth and Justice; doth not arise from their being tried by the Standard of Humane Reason, but the contrary, (*viz.*) their not being tried by that Standard; for when Men take in all the Circumstances which attend these, and exercise their Reason thereupon, then all these seeming Contradictions vanish: And it is Men's barely looking at these, without taking in the several Circumstances that attend them, and without exercising their Reason upon them, which makes them appear thus Contradictory. And this will appear from considering the several Texts which the *Objection* referreth to.

As to *1 Sam.* 2. 30, I said indeed, That thy House, and the House of thy Fathers should walk before me for ever; but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me. Here the *Objection* supposes that God fail'd of his Promise to *Phineas*, and so acted contrary to the Rules of Truth and Justice. To this I Answer, (*first,*) That by the Terms, for Ever, and Everlasting (as it is expressed

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press'd in Num. 25. 13.) he could not reasonably be
 suppos'd to imply any more than a Long time ; at
 most no longer than That Dispensation the Church
 was then under : and therefore if the Promise was
 made good to *Phinebas* his Posterity for a Long
 time, (as indeed it was, from the time of its ma-
 king, to the time when *Abiathar* was turn'd
 out of the Priesthood, 1 King. 2. 26, 27, which
 was upward of 400 Years ; (then it was fulfill'd in
 the Letter of it, according to the Sense of those
 words, *for Ever, and Everlasting*, in the Language of
 the Scriptures. But supposing this was not a fulfil-
 ling of it in the Letter of the Promise, I answer,
Secondly, That the occasion of this Promise was *Phi-
 nebas's* pious Zeal for the Honour of God, in endea-
 vouring to put a Stop to that Whoredom and Idola-
 try which the Children of *Israel* committed with the
Moabites ; and the End of this Promise was, that it
 might be as a Reward to *Phinebas* for his good Service ;
 and as an Encouragement to him and his Posterity to
 persevere in their Duty. This being the Case ; I say
 that neither *Phinebas*, nor his Posterity, could with
 any colour of Reason suppose that God did intend
 to continue them in his extraordinary Favour any
 longer than they did continue in their Duty and O-
 bedience ; or that the Truth or Justice of God could
 be concern'd to make good this Promise to them any
 longer than they did continue to walk in his Fear.
 The Promise was made as an Encouragement to Du-
 ty, which it could not be if God was obliged by it
 to continue them in his extraordinary Favour when
 they did live in a State of Rebellion against him.
 Again, I say, That as this Promise was made to *Phine-
 bas* and his Issue, who were thoroughly acquainted with
 the Method of Gods dealing with the Children of
Israel, and of those many Promises and Threats which
 he made to them ; so they could not but know, that
 God's Promises and Blessings did belong to them no
 longer

longer than they did walk in his Commandments; and that when they did cast off the Lord, the Lord would cast off them. This being so; I farther say, That they could not but know, that God did bind himself by this Promise to them, only so far, and so long as they did continue to walk in the steps of *Phinehas* their Father, to whom this Promise was made; And it is plain that *Eli* himself understood it so to be, as appears by his Reasoning with his Sons, *ver. 25. If one Man sin against another, the Judge shall judge him; but if a Man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?* Again, I say, That as God gave them this Promise by the Mouth of *Moses*, so he also fully acquainted them by the Mouth of the same *Moses*, in what sense they were to understand this, and all other Promises which God gave to the Children of *Israel*; as in *Deu. 7. 9, 10, 12. Know therefore, that the Lord thy God, He is the faithful God, which keepeth Covenant and Mercy with those that love him, and keep his Commandments, to a Thousand Generations; and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack to him that hateth him; he will repay him to his face. — Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken, to these Judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the Covenant, and the Mercy which he swore unto thy Fathers.* Thus we see, that as God by the Mouth of *Moses* acquainted *Phineas* with his Will, that he gave unto him his Covenant of Peace, and to his Seed after him, even an Everlasting Covenant, *Num. 25. 12, 13*; So he likewise acquainted him by the same *Moses*, that this Covenant was to be made good unto them, if they did love him, and keep his Commandments; and that otherways God stood no way engaged to them by his Promise. This being the Case; I say, That as *Phineas's* Issue had no reason, nor Right, to claim an Interest in this Promise, if they did not continue in their Duty; so neither did God act contrary to the Rules

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Rules of Truth and Justice, if for their Disobedience he did take from them what he had promised to them.

As to the Case of *Benbadad* King of Syria, 2 King. 8, 10. *And Elisha said unto him, (Hazael,) Go, and tell him, (Benbadad) Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the Lord hath shewed me, that he shall surely die.* To this I answer: When the Prophet bid *Hazael* tell his Master, that he might live; This was true, because this respects his Distemper; his Illness was such as would not prove Mortal to him, and in that respect he might certainly recover: But forasmuch as God foresaw that *Hazael* would murder *Benbadad*; therefore the Prophet said, *The Lord hath shewed me, that he shall surely die.*

As to the Case in *Psalms* 89. where, in one part of the *Psalms*, is largely set forth the Promises of God to *David*, and his Posterity; and in another part is set forth the Non-performance of those Promises, which the Objections suppose to be an Impeachment of the Truth and Justice of God:

To this I Answer; That as in one part of the *Psalms* is set forth the Promises of God to *David*, and his Issue; so the sacred History hath largely set forth the fulfilling of these Promises to *David* and his Seed; and so hath sufficiently vindicated the Truth and Justice of God in this respect: And as to what is contain'd in the other part of the *Psalms* referr'd to, this doth not in the least prove God to be worse than his Promise, (for That the sacred History hath fully clear'd;) and therefore the most that this can be supposed to prove, is the *Psalms*'s Distrust and Fear, that God would not fulfil his Promises to them, seeing, to outward appearance, all things at that time ran the contrary way. An Instance like this we have in *Psal.* 116. 11. where *David* saith, *I said in my haste, all Men are Liars*; or as he expresses himself in 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. *I shall one day perish by the hands of Saul.* *Samuel*

had said, that *David* should be King of *Israel*, and had anointed him for that Dignity, by the appointment of the Lord : but when *David* was forc'd to fly from *Saul*, and was in great jeopardy of his Life, he then began to conclude, that this Promise would not be made good to him, because he expected to fall as a Sacrifice to *Saul's* Malice : And this made him to say in his haste, *That all Men were Liars* ; that is, that *Samuel* as well as others had deceived him. Now tho' *David* said in his haste that *Samuel* had lied to him in the Name of the Lord, yet this was no Proof that God had fail'd of his Promise made to *David*, by *Samuel* ; for God did in his good time bring him to the Kingdom : but all that this proves is, that *David's* Faith and Hope fail'd in the Day of his Distress. So in the Case before us, here is a large account of God's Promise to *David*, and his Seed ; and here is likewise an account of the *Psalmist's* complaining of the Non-performance of these Promises to them. Now tho' the *Psalmist* did thus complain, this is no Proof that God was false and unjust to them ; for God did actually fulfil these Promises to them : And all that this proves is, that the *Psalmist* in their Adversity, when the course of God's Providence was against them, did distrust, and fear that God would fail of making good his Promises to them : I say, This is the most that can be pretended to be proved from this place. But I think the true State of the Case is this : The *Psalmist* recounts the Promises of God, and the present Circumstance of the Affairs of *David's* Family ; and from thence he draws an Argument to plead with God for their Protection and Deliverance ; for thus he expresses himself, *ver. 46, How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thy Face, for ever ?* and *ver. 50, Lord, where are thy old Loving-kindnesses, which thou swarest to David in thy Truth ?* An Instance like this we have in *Jacob*, who when he was distress'd with fear that his Brother *Esau* would destroy both him and his Substance,

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stance, he then made use of God's Promise, as an Argument to plead with God for his Protection, Gen. 32. 9 — 12.

As to the Case of King *Hezekiah*, Isa. 38. 1. In those days was *Hezekiah* sick unto Death; and *Isaiah* the Prophet, the Son of *Amos*, came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thy House in order, for thou shalt die and not live. ver. 4, 5. Then came the word of the Lord to *Isaiah*, saying, Go, and say to *Hezekiah*, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy Father; I have heard thy Prayer, I have seen thy Tears; behold, I will add unto thy Days fifteen Years: I answer; What the Prophet said unto the King, ver. 1, was True, that he should die, and not live; but then we are to remember that the Prophet did not pronounce this as a judiciary Sentence from the Lord, but only as a friendly Warning of the Kings Danger. The History informs us that *Hezekiah* was sick unto Death; that is, he was sick of such a Disease, as according to the natural and ordinary course of things, would prove mortal, and so would end in the Kings Death: This being the Case, the Lord sent the Prophet on this friendly Errand, to acquaint the King with the Danger that he was in, from that Distemper he was under; and to let him know, that it would according to the natural course of things end in his Death; and that he ought to set his House in order, and prepare for his Change: which is as much as if the Prophet had said, I am come to acquaint thee with the Danger of thy present Illness; therefore settle the Affairs of thine House, for the Distemper thou art labouring under is such as according to the natural and ordinary course of things will prove mortal to thee, and end in thy Death: For the words, *Thou shalt Die, and not Live*, do signify no more than, Thou wilt Die and not Live; and this *shalt*, or *wilt*, did not arise from a judiciary Sentence which the Lord had given out against him, but from the nature

ture and malignity of his Distemper, (as I observ'd before;) and thus *Hezekiah* understood it: And therefore knowing that God was the God of Nature, and that it was in his Power to bring back from the Grave; and being sensible that he should die in the midst of his Age, and without any Issue to sit upon his Throne; he turn'd his Face unto the Wall, and pray'd unto the Lord, and wept sore: Upon which the Prophet was sent a second time, to acquaint *Hezekiah* that the Lord had heard his Prayer, and seen his Tears, and that he would exercise his miraculous Power and Grace in rebuking his Distemper, and would add unto his Days fifteen Years.

As to the Case of *Jeremiah*, Chap. 15, 18, *Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a Liar, and as Waters that fail?* I answer: The Lord, when he called *Jeremiah*, and sent him to proclaim his Word to the People of *Judea*, bid him, Chap. 1, 8, Not to be afraid of their Faces; and then he promised him, for his Comfort and Encouragement, saying, *I am with thee, to deliver thee, saith the Lord.* This Promise was made good to *Jeremiah*; for the Lord was with him always, either to preserve him from, or to deliver him out of all Distresses: But yet God was pleas'd sometimes to try the Faith and Patience of *Jeremiah*, by leaving him for a long time in the hand, and under the Burden of his Persecutors; and this was the Case at this time, as appears from *Jer.* 15. 15 *O Lord, thou knowest, remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my Persecutors:* And ver. 18. *Why is my Pain perpetual, and my Wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a Liar, and as Waters that fail?* These then are the Groans of *Jeremiah* under his Burden, and his Desire that God would appear for his help, and no longer disappoint his Hope and Expectation.

As to the other Complaint of *Jeremiah*, Chap. 20, 7, *O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived:*

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ceived: Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I answer: The Case plainly appears to be this; *Jeremiah* had cried, or proclaimed the Word of the Lord to the People of *Judea*: But it was so far from having any good effect upon them, that on the contrary they made it, and *Jeremiah* on the account of it, the subject of their Mockery and Derision daily; *Ver. 7. 8.* Upon this, the Prophet resolv'd that he would make no more mention of God to them, nor speak any more in his Name, *Ver. 9.* But tho' he had thus resolv'd not to speak to them any more in the Name of God, yet God thought fit to disappoint or deceive his Resolution, in that he would not suffer him to sit still, and let them alone in their folly, *Ver. 9.* But his Word was in mine Heart as a Burning Fire, shut up in my Bones; and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay; that is, he could no longer refrain from declaring the Word of the Lord to the People. So that God's deceiving of *Jeremiah*, and his being stronger than he, was his deceiving or disappointing and overcoming his Resolution of not speaking any more in the Name of God; and it was not any failure of Prediction, as some have imagined.

As to the Case of *Jonah*, Chap. 3, 4, *Tet forty Days, and Nineveh shall be destroy'd*; I answer: The end of all Divine Threatning, is the preventing the Evil threatn'd, either by preventing That Sin and Folly which makes Men the Objects of Divine Displeasure, or else by bringing them to that Repentance which makes them the Objects of God's pardoning Mercy: And therefore when *Jonah* preach'd, *Tet forty Days, and Nineveh shall be destroy'd*, it was plainly to be understood in That very Threatning, that if the *Ninevites* did repent, and turn to God, it would be a Means of preventing the Evil threatened; For otherways That Threatning would not have been given; For the *Ninevites* might justly have reason'd thus, If God had so determin'd the Destruction

struction of our City, and if he did intend that his Threatning should be so understood as that nothing should hinder the executing of it, then there was no need of this Threatning, nor of his Care in sending his Prophet so long and tedious a Journey to publish it; because it could answer no good End, nor be of any manner of Use to us: And therefore it is just and reasonable for us to infer from this very Threatning, that God hath sent his Prophet in kindness to us, to warn us of our Danger, and so to bring us to that Repentance and Retormation which may avert the Evil threatn'd: And it is plain that the *Ninevites* did thus understand the Threatning; for if they had understood it so that God would not upon any terms avert the Evil threatn'd, then this Threatning would effectually have driven them to Despair, but it could not have brought them to Repentance, which we find it did. If it should be here replied, What is this to salve the Truth of God, who said, expressly, *Tet forty Days, and Nineveh shall be destroy'd*; when at the same time he foresaw that it would not be destroy'd? I answer; As God foresaw that *Nineveh* would not be destroy'd, so he foresaw that the threatning That Destruction would be the very Means by which it would be prevented; and therefore when God said, *Tet forty Days, and Nineveh shall be destroy'd*; he could not with any colour of Reason or Justice be supposed to intend any more by his Threatning than this, (*viz.*) That as the *Ninevites* by their Sin and Folly had made themselves the Objects of God's Displeasure, so, if they did not repent and turn to God, his Patience and Long-suffering should be exercis'd no longer than forty Days more towards them. And as this is a just Interpretation of God's Threatnings from the Nature and Reason of the thing, so it is agreeable to that Declaration which God made by *Jeremiah*, Chap. 18. 7—10, *At what Instant I shall*
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Speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy; if that Nation of whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to do unto them: And at what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to build, and to plant it; if it do Evil in my sight, that it obey not my Voice, then I will repent of the Good wherewith I said I would benefit them.

Thus we see that those Texts, which the Objection supposes to impeach God of Falshood and Injustice, when they are tried by the Standard of Humane Reason, are very consistent with both.

May we all so know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, as that we may be conform'd to his Likeness, and may be changed from Glory to Glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

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APPENDIX,

Being an Enquiry concerning Infinite Justice, and Infinite Satisfaction.

THIS Enquiry is two-fold; *First*, Whether there be any such thing as Infinite Justice; and *Secondly*, Whether there be any such thing as Infinite Satisfaction.

First, Whether there be any such thing as Infinite Justice.

In order to answer this Enquiry, it is necessary to state the Notions, both of Infinite, and of Justice.

Infinite, is That which is without Measure, Bounds, or Limitation; and to which there can be no Addition.

Justice, is the Ballance of common Equity, by which is weighed out or dispensed Good and Evil, in a proportion exact and equal to the Merit or Demerit of Things, or to any other Right of Claim: So that Justice, in the Ministration of Good, is the exact Mean between Bounty and Fraud; the Ballance of Justice standing upon such an even Poize, as that if it turn to one side, it is Bounty; if to the other, it is Fraud: And the exercising of either Bounty or Fraud in the Ministration of Good, is a breaking the Ballance of Justice, that is, it is Unjust, strictly speaking. Again, Justice in the Ministration of

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Evil, is the exact Mean between Mercy and Cruelty; the Ballance of Justice standing upon such an even Poize, as that if it turn to one side, it is Mercy; if to the other, it is Cruelty: And the exercising of either Mercy or Cruelty in the Ministration of Evil, is a breaking the Ballance of Justice, that is, it is Unjust, strictly speaking.

This being so; it follows, that Justice admits of no such Distinctions as Finite or Infinite, because in Justice there are no Degrees, Justice being the same in all its Acts, none is greater or less than others; all and every of its Acts being equally great alike: For in the Ministration of Evil, it is as great an Act of Justice to proportion a lesser Evil to a lesser Crime, as it is to proportion a greater Evil to a greater Crime: It is the highest act of Justice in an Inferior Magistrate, to punish the smallest Offence with a proportionable Punishment: And it is the lowest act of Justice, even in the supreme God, to punish the greatest Offence with a proportionable Punishment; Justice being the same in both Cases, (*viz.*) an equaling the Punishment to the Demerit of the Offence.

Justice may be ministred by a Finite, or by an Infinite Being; and it may be ministred to a Finite, or to an Infinite Being; but still Justice is the same in either: And if we do suppose an Infinite Crime, (for Crimes to admit of Degrees; some are greater, some are less;) I say, supposing we do admit of an Infinite Crime, all that Justice is concern'd to do with relation to this Infinite Crime, is to proportion a Punishment in an exact equality to the Demerit of this Infinite Offence: And there is as much as this done in proportioning a Punishment in an exact equality to the least Offence possible.

The Cause is the same with relation to Justice in the Ministration of Good: From all which it appears,

pears, that there is no such thing (properly speaking) as Infinite Justice.

Secondly, Whether there be any such thing as Infinite Satisfaction?

In order to answer this Enquiry, it is likewise necessary to state the Notions of Infinite, and of Satisfaction.

Infinite is (as I have said) that which is without Measure, Bounds, or Limitation; and to which there can be no addition.

Satisfaction is the answering to the full the Demand of another; whether that Demand be just or unjust, finite or infinite. Just Demands, are such as are exactly proportionable to the Damage or Demerit of the Offence, or to the Merit of the thing rewarded, or to any other right of Claim. Unjust Demands are such as are not thus proportionable, but are either greater or less than the Damage or Demerit of the Offence, or the Merit of the thing Rewarded, &c. Finite Demands are such as are limited, and are capable of being extended to a greater Degree. Infinite Demands are such as are without Bounds or Limitation, and are incapable of any Extention or Addition. From which it appears, that Infinite Satisfaction supposes an Infinite Demand, and an Infinite Demand (if the Demand be just,) supposes an Infinite Crime, or an Infinite Merit, or some other Right of Claim equally Infinite. We will only consider this Matter as it relates to an Infinite Crime, because the Case is the same when applied to Infinite Merit, or to any other Right of Claim.

Now with relation to Crime, it is very uncertain whether there be any such thing as an Infinite Crime. For, first, the committing a Crime against an Infinite Being does not make that Crime Infinite: And this will appear if we consider that the Crimes which are committed against God, (who is an Infinite Being.)

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do admit of Degrees; some are greater, some are less whereas in Infinity there is no such thing as Degrees. We read, 1 Kings 16. 25. *Omri wrought Evil in the Sight of the Lord, and did worse than all that were before him.* And 2 Chron. 33. 9. *Manasseh made Judah and the Inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the Heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the Children of Israel.* 2 Tim. 3. 13. *Evil Men and Seducers shall (or will) wax worse and worse, &c.*

Secondly, It is a Question, Whether a Finite Being can be guilty of an Infinite Crime, seeing the committing a Crime against an Infinite Being does not make it so.

Thirdly, Supposing that a Finite Being can be guilty of an Infinite Crime, yet it remains a Question, whether there has been any such Infinite Crime ever committed; because it is a thing above our Faith and Knowledge, whether the greatest Crime that was ever committed, even the Sin of the Devil himself, was Infinitely aggravated, and to which there could be no farther Degree of Aggravation added. For, That is properly an Infinite Crime, which is without Bounds or Limitation, and to which there could be no degree of Aggravation added, to make it yet more Criminal. Seeing then that it is so very uncertain, whether there be any such thing as an Infinite Crime, it will follow, that it is equally as uncertain, whether there be any such thing as an Infinite Demand, and consequently whether there be any such thing as Infinite Satisfaction.

Some farther Observations.

Forasmuch as the Justice of God is often referr'd to in certain Controversies, it may not be amiss here to observe some common Mistakes relating thereto.

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First, That God is in Justice absolutely and necessarily obliged to punish the Breach of his Laws, either in the Offender, or in some other that shall be substituted to suffer in the place of the Offender.

Secondly, That he which is substituted to suffer in the place of the Offender, must so suffer, as that his suffering shall be strictly and in the nature of the thing Equal to the Demerit of the Crime.

These Premises being taken for granted as true, from hence it hath been inferr'd,

Thirdly, That he which suffers in the Sinners behalf, must be in all points Equal to, and the same as the Supreme Lawgiver; or else, (say they,) he cannot so suffer as to satisfy Divine Justice, nor can the Sinner be discharg'd upon his account.

The foregoing Premises being taken for granted as true, and the foregoing Inference being supposed to be justly drawn from them; it has been farther concluded,

Fourthly, That forasmuch as the Sinner is acquitted upon the account of the Sufferings of Christ, therefore Christ is in all points Equal to, and the same as the Supreme God the Father; for otherways (say they) his Sufferings would not have been so satisfactory, neither would the Sinner be discharged upon their account.

But as the foregoing Premises are erroneous, so are the Conclusions too hasty, which are drawn from them. For supposing God is in Justice absolutely obliged to punish for the Breach of his Laws, and supposing his Justice could not be satisfied except the Suffering was strictly Equal to the Demerit of the Crime; (which are Both Mistakes; because if God is obliged to punish for Sin, yet this obligation arises not from his Justice, but from his Truth and Holiness; and because it lies wholly in the Breast of the Lawgiver, to demand what Satisfaction he pleases for the Breach of his Laws, provided the Demand does not

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not exceed the Demerit of the Crime :) But, I say, Supposing the Premises to be true, yet it does not follow from hence that he which suffers in the Sinners behalf must be in all respects the same as the original Lawgiver; but the contrary. For if God is obliged by the Laws of Equity or Justice to act so strictly in this Case, then it will follow, First, that that the Person suffering must be neither Superior nor Inferior, but exactly Equal to, and in all respects the same as the Offender, because the Sufferer is substituted to fill up the Place of, or personate the Offender, and not the Offended. Secondly, the Suffering or Punishment must be for kind, measure, and duration, neither greater nor less, but exactly Equal to the Demerit of the Offence. Seeing then that it was Man which transgress'd, it will follow, that he which is substituted to suffer in Man's stead, must be neither Superior nor Inferior, but exactly Equal to, and in all points the same as Man, or else his Sufferings will not satisfy Divine Justice, neither will the Sinner be discharg'd upon their account.

But the Truth is ; God is not oblig'd, from the Principles of Justice, to make any of the forementioned Demands ; as has been made evident in the foregoing Enquiry concerning the Justice of God : But he may require, or may accept, what Punishment, or what Satisfaction, he himself alone in his infinite Wisdom shall think fit.

Faith

Faith and Mysteries :

O R,

A Four-fold Enquiry ; First, What Faith is ; Secondly, What the Object of Faith is ; Thirdly, What a Mystery is ; Fourthly, Whether a Mystery is the Object of Faith.

WITH AN

APPENDIX, concerning the Use of Reason
in Matters of Revelation.

F*irst*, What Faith is.

In order to answer this Enquiry, it is to be observed, that as the Understanding has Truth for it's Object, so also there are various ways by which Truth is convey'd to the Understanding. Namely, *First*, by our External Senses, (*viz.*) Seeing, Hearing, Feeling, Tasting, and Smelling. For Example ; that Honey is sweet, is a Truth which is convey'd to the Understanding by our external Sense of Tasting. *Secondly*, Truth is convey'd to the Understanding by our Internal Senses, that is, by the Reflexions of the Mind. For Example ; that there is a God, is a Truth which is convey'd to our Understandings by Reflexion. God is a Being which is immaterial ; and so is not the Object of our External

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nal Senses; therefore our External Senses cannot convey That to our Understandings, which comes not within their reach : But when we see the visible Creation, which is the Work of God, we do by reflecting discover it's Maker; and so this Truth, That there is a God, is convey'd to our Understandings by our Internal Senses, namely, our Reflecting Powers, or, in other words, by our Reason. *Thirdly*, Truth is convey'd to our Understandings by the Report or Testimony of others : For Example, that there was such a Man as *Julius Cæsar*, is a Truth which is convey'd to our Understandings by such Report; for *Julius Cæsar* died long before any Person now living was born, and consequently no Person now living can be inform'd of this Truth by an External Perception of his Person : And our Reflecting Powers alone cannot discover to us that there was such a Man; Consequently it is impossible that our Understandings should be inform'd of this Truth, if it were not some way or other convey'd to us by the Report or Testimony of others.

Now as Truth is convey'd to our Understandings different Ways; so the Act of the Understanding in the apprehending of Truth, is call'd by different Names, from those different Ways of Conveyance. When Truth is convey'd to our Understandings by our External, or by our Internal Senses, then in propriety of Speech this is call'd *Knowledge*. And when Truth is convey'd by the Report or Testimony of others, then in propriety of Speech it is call'd *Faith*. Not but that these Terms are commonly used promiscuously, being put one for the other; for we often call That, *Knowledge*, which properly speaking is an Act of Believing; and we likewise call That, Believing, which to speak properly is an Act of Knowledge. And in all these, the Act of the Mind is the same, (*viz.*) the Apprehending of, and Assenting to any thing as Truth, from the Informati-

on that it hath receiv'd, either from our External or Internal Senses, or from the Report and Testimony of others. And it is so far, and only so far an Act, either of Knowledge or Belief, as our Understandings do apprehend and assent to it: For, what our Understandings do not apprehend and assent to, is neither an Act of Knowledge nor Belief; because That cannot properly be call'd an Act of the Understanding, (as Knowledge and Faith are) which our Understandings do not perceive. So then Faith, in propriety of Speech, and when distinguish'd from Knowledge, is That Act of the Understanding, which assents to any thing as Truth, barely upon the Credit of him that reports it: I say, Barely upon the Credit of the Reporter: Because if any Truth is reported to us by Another, which upon Reflexion appears to be Self-evident, or which is made so by our External Senses, then the Act of the Understanding, in assenting in such a Case, cannot properly be call'd Faith, because That Act does not wholly arise from such Report.

And here it may not be amiss to observe the common Distinction between Humane and Divine Faith. Humane Faith is an Assent to a credible Proposition meerly upon the Testimony of Man, the just ground of that Assent being the Ability of the Testifier to know the Truth of what he testifies, and his Honesty in testifying what he knows; which because we can have no absolute Assurance of, we can have no absolute Reliance on the Truth of any purely Humane Testimony. I say, It is an Assenting to a thing credible, upon the foremention'd ground: Because if we assent to a thing incredible, or to a credible thing, when we have not just ground for that Assent, this I think is not properly call'd Faith or Believing, but Credulity or Presuming. Divine Faith is an assent to a Proposition reveal'd by God; who, being Omni-

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scient, cannot be ignorant of the thing reveal'd; and being the God of Truth, cannot deceive us with a Lye.

Secondly, What the Object of Faith is.

In answer to this Enquiry I observe, that the Object of Faith may be consider'd in a three-fold respect; *First*, What a Man ought to believe; *Secondly*, What he does believe; and *Thirdly*, What he can, or is capable of believing. (Note, I here refer only to Divine Faith.)

First, a Man *ought* to believe all those Divine Propositions whose Sense and Meaning hath been reveal'd or made known to his Understanding, or that might have been, were it not some way or other his own Fault; Which Propositions have such Evidence accompanying them, as in Reason and Justice proves them to be Divine or from God; and therefore all such Propositions, in this respect are the Object of Faith.

Secondly, A Man *does* believe all those Divine Propositions, whose Sense and Meaning he actually assents to the Truth of; and therefore in this respect all such Propositions are the Object of Faith.

Thirdly, What a Man *can*, or is capable of believing. This likewise may be consider'd in two respects; *First*, What he can believe, if all Impediments were remov'd; *Secondly*, What he can or is capable of believing in the present Circumstances of Things, that is, while those Impediments are still remaining:

First, A Man can, or is capable of believing (supposing all Impediments remov'd) all Divine Propositions; and so, in this respect all such Propositions are the Object of Faith.

Secondly, What a Man can, or is capable of believing in the present Circumstances of Things; which supposes the Impediments to Faith (such as Sloth, Carelessness, Prejudice, the Proposition being deliver'd in an unknown Tongue,) and the like) still remaining; the Object of Faith, in this respect, being what we

are at present enquiring after. To this I answer, That a Man can, or is capable of believing all those Divine Propositions, and only those the Sense and Meaning of which are reveal'd to his Understanding; so far, and to that Degree, as they are thus reveal'd. Thus for Example, God hath declar'd that he will judge the World. Now all those Men whose Understandings are inform'd of the Sense and Meaning of this Proposition, can believe, that is, they are capable of giving their Assent to this Truth, [That God will judge the World;] but all those Men whose Understandings are not inform'd of the Sense and Meaning of the aforesaid Proposition, such Men cannot assent to, or believe it, whilst they continue in that uninform'd State; because Faith follows, but never goes before the Understanding: We first understand the Sense and Meaning of the Proposition, and then believe it, or assent to the Truth of it; and we cannot believe the least Tittle, till it be first apprehended by the Understanding. This is evident from the nature of Faith; For as Faith is an assent of the Mind, to the Truth of a Proposition convey'd to the Understanding by the Report or Testimony of others; so This Assent necessarily presupposes that the Understanding is inform'd of, or apprehends the thing which it assents to; there being no such thing in nature as the believing an Unintelligible Proposition. To assent to we understand not what, is in reality no assent: And therefore if the formention'd Truth (*viz.*) That God will judge the World, had been declar'd in such a Language, or in such a Manner, that Mankind could not, or did not discern what God Almighty did signify and intend by it; as this (properly speaking) would not have been a Revelation, because there is nothing discover'd or made known by it; so no Man could possibly have given his Assent to the Truth of it whilst he remain'd thus ingorant, because there was no Truth discover'd

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or reveal'd for him to give his Assent to. And sup-
 posing that the Person employ'd to make the foremen-
 tion'd Declaration, had given Sight to the Blind,
 Feet to the Lame, Health to the Sick, and Life to
 the Dead ; and had done all that was necessary, or
 that could be done, to prove his Message to be from
 God ; yet so long as Men remain'd ignorant of that
 Message, or so long as their Understandings remain'd
 uninform'd of the Sense and Meaning of it, so long
 they were utterly incapable of giving their Assent
 to the Truth of it. Indeed they may believe this
 Message to be Divine, from the Evidence which at-
 tended it ; and they may be assur'd from natural Rea-
 son that all Divine Propositions are true, and conse-
 quently that the foremention'd Proposition is true
 in the Sense of the Proposer ; but then this is no
 more than a general Faith in Divine Propositi-
 ons at large, and not a particular Act of Faith in
 the Sense and Meaning of the foremention'd Propo-
 sition. The Sense and Meaning of this Proposition
 is, That God will judge the World ; but they being
 wholly ignorant of this Meaning, it makes them
 wholly incapable of giving their Assent to this Truth
viz.) That God will judge the World. They be-
 lieve at large, that all God reveals is true ; and,
 as a Consequence of this general Faith, they believe
 every particular Divine Proposition to be true in the
 Sense of the Revealer, tho' they do not understand
 what the Sense and Meaning of that Proposition is :
 But this is not a particular Act of Faith in the Truth
 contain'd in that Proposition ; but only a general
 Faith in God, that all he saith is true. Thus the Dis-
 ciples of our Lord believ'd what the Prophets had
 spoken was from God, and they doubtless were per-
 swaded that all Divine Propositions were true, and
 consequently all that the Prophets had spoken was true
 in the Sense of the Proposer ; But yet as they did not
 understand what the Sense and Meaning of those Pro-
 phesies were, which related to the Sufferings, Death,
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and Resurrection of Christ; so they did not assent to, or believe them. So far as they were slow to understand, so far they were slow to believe what the Prophets had spoken, And this our Lord upbraided them with, *Luk. 24. 25, saying. O Fools, and slow of Heart to believe all that the Prophets, &c.* And as the shortness of their Faith was occasion'd from the shortness of their Understandings; so our Lord, to cure this Evil, and remove this Infidelity, helped their Understandings by explaining to them *those* Prophecies, and giving them the Sense and Meaning of them, *ver. 27. Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself: Or, as it is said ver. 45. He opened their Understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures, saying unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, &c.* And in so doing he made That the Object of their Faith, or made them capable of believing it, which before was not so.

Again, I say, a Man can assent so far, and to such a Degree, as things are thus reveal'd to his Understanding; and no farther; That is, he can extend his Assent so far as his Understanding goes into things, and no farther. For suppose God had made a Declaration to Men, which they understood but in part; then, I say, they can assent to but Part of that Declaration, (*viz.*) to that Part they do understand the Sense and Meaning of; and they must suspend their assent to the other Part, till such time as they do understand it. For Example, suppose this Proposition, [*Bidry* is *Midry*,] was contain'd God's Word; and suppose the two Terms *Bidry* and *Midry*, have no known Signification; I say, So far as our Understandings goes into this Proposition, that is, so far as we do apprehend the Sense and Meaning of it, so far we are capable of believing it, and no farther. That *Bidry* [*is*] *Midry* this we apprehend; that is, we apprehend that God uses these two Words to express one and

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and the same thing; and this we believe or assent to, because God hath declar'd that he doth so. But then, as we do not understand what either of these Terms do signify, so we cannot believe the least tittle about the thing it self, which is express'd by them; and consequently we can believe but Part of the foregoing Proposition, (*viz.*) That Part which we do understand: And as to the other Part, we must suspend our Assent, till such time as we do understand one or other of these Terms: I say, One or other; because if we understand One of them, then we should understand the whole Proposition; As suppose it was express'd thus, [*Bictry is Defamation;*] here, as we understand that *Bictry* and *Defamation* express the same thing, so we likewise understand what *Bictry* means, (*viz.*) the *Blasting a Persons Reputation*; and consequently, we can assent to the Truth of all the Proposition, because we do understand it wholly.

Again; If God declares a thing but in Part, and does not declare the Whole of the thing; in such a Case our Assent can also extend no farther than to that which is declar'd: For Example: God hath declar'd; that there shall be a Resurrection from the Dead, but hath not declar'd the precise time *When* that great Work shall be effected: Here, so far as God hath reveal'd this Matter to us, we can believe it, (*viz.*) that he will raise the Dead; but when he will do it, as the [*when*] is not reveal'd, so it is what we cannot assent to. The precise Time when God will raise the Dead, is a Secret, which is not yet disclos'd; and therefore we are incapable of believing it: So that as far as we are ignorant of Things, so far our Assent must be suspended, let what will be the ground of that Ignorance, and consequently of the Infidelity occasion'd by it; whether Carelessness, Prejudice, or any other Cause; whether it be our Misfortune, or our Crime, the Case in this respect is the same if we are ignorant: And so far as we are so, so far

if the present Circumstance of things we are incapable of giving our Assent to the Truth of any Proposition whatsoever.

Upon the whole, I think it abundantly evident, that in the present Circumstance of things, (which supposes the Impediments to Faith remaining,) a Man can, or is capable of believing all those Divine Propositions, and only those, which are reveal'd to his Understanding, and which he doth actually apprehend the Sense and Meaning of; and only so far, and to that Degree, as they are thus apprehended: Therefore all such Propositions, and only such, in this respect are the Object of Faith.

Thirdly, What a Mystery is

In Answer to this Enquiry, I say, The Word Mystery, (as I conceive,) in it's proper Sense signifies a *Hidden Thing*. Any thing which is spoken to us, which we do not understand, is called a Mystery; that is, it is to us Hidden or Conceal'd: And any thing which is done, that we do not conceive *How*, or in *What Manner* it is done, the Manner of the doing of that Thing is also call'd a Mystery; because *How* or in *What Manner* it is done, is hid from us: Not but that the word Mystery is often used in an improper Sense, and that in several respects; as *First*, when a Thing is spoken or done in such a Manner, as that it is difficult to conceive and apprehend it: This is often call'd a Mystery, whether we apprehend it or not. *Secondly*, That which was not discoverable by Humane Reason, without the help of Divine Revelation, is likewise call'd a Mystery, after it is reveal'd and understood: Thus the Grace of God in Christ to Mankind, and that the *Gentiles* should be Sharers in this Grace, is call'd a Mystery, which had been hid from Ages and Generations, but now was made manifest by the preaching of the Gospel. *Thirdly*, Any thing which was a Mystery before we did apprehend it, is likewise

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improperly call'd a Mystery after we do apprehend it; not that it is then really so, but because it was so antecedent to our apprehending of it. But when the word Mystery is applied to any thing that we do actually understand, I think it is so only in an improper Sense; and that, strictly speaking, a Mystery is properly that which our Understandings do not actually conceive or apprehend.

Fourthly, Whether a Mystery is the Object of Faith.

Note; by the Object of Faith, in this place, I do not mean with respect to what a Man ought to believe; nor what he can, or is capable of believing, supposing all Impediments were removed; but only with respect to what a Man does believe, or is capable of believing in the present Circumstances of things, which supposes the Impediments to Faith still remaining.

This being premised; in answer now to the Enquiry, I say, We need only to make application of what hath been observed already under the former Heads. For 'tis evident, *First*, when the word Mystery is used in a proper Sense, then a Mystery is not the Object of Faith; a Mystery being That which we do not apprehend, and the Object of Faith being always that which we do apprehend. Indeed That which is a Mystery, may become the Object of Faith when it is apprehended; but then it ceases to be a Mystery properly so call'd. *Secondly*, When the word Mystery is used in an improper Sense, then it may be the Object of Faith, or it may not. If it be improperly used to signify a thing difficult to be understood, then, if we do actually apprehend that difficult thing, it is the Object of Faith, because we do actually apprehend it: But if we do not apprehend it, then it becomes a Mystery in a proper Sense, and so is not the Object of Faith. Again, if the Word Mystery be improperly used to signify that which

was not discoverable by Humane Reason alone, without the help of Divine Revelation ; if the Proposition is apprehended by us, it is the Object of Faith ; but if it is not actually apprehended by us, it is then a Mystery in the proper Sense, and so is not the Object of Faith at all, whilst it thus continues hid from us. Again, if the word Mystery be improperly used to signify that which was a Mystery before it was apprehended, and is so called after it is apprehended, upon that Account ; then it is the Object of Faith always. So then upon the whole it appears, that a Mystery, properly and strictly speaking, is not the Object of Faith, while it continues so ; and likewise what a weak excuse Men make, when they excuse the Unintelligibleness, Absurdity, and Contradictoriness of their Opinions with this Plea, That 'tis a Mystery, and that, as such, it is our Duty to believe it, and not curiously to search into it ; because (say they) Mysteries, at least Mysteries in Religion, are above the reach of Humane Understandings, and therefore to be believed, and not Reason'd upon.

If to what is here said it should be replied, That there are several Articles of Faith, which as Christians we are obliged to assent to, and which we do actually exercise our Faith upon, and yet we do not apprehend them, so that they are Mysteries in a proper Sense ; such as the Conception of our Saviour in the Womb of the Virgin, by the Power of the Holy Ghost ; the Resurrection of the Body ; and the like. For How the Bodily part of our Saviour was generated in the Womb of the Virgin, by the Power of the Holy Ghost, without the help of a Man ; and how our scattered Dust shall be gather'd and united to compose the same Body ; are Mysteries which we are not able to see thorow ; And yet the Conception of our Saviour, and the Resurrection of the Body, are Articles of our common Creed, and such as we

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all profess to give our Assent to; and consequently a Mystery properly so called, is the Object of Faith.

I answer. That there are many things related, which contain in them what is above the reach of Humane Understanding, and which we do not actually apprehend, and so are Mysteries in a proper Sense, I readily grant: But that the Mysteious parts of those Truths are the Object of Faith, this I deny. Faith, as I said before, is the assenting to any thing as Truth, barely upon the Credit of the Revealer. Now we can never be said to assent to that which we have no Idea of. To assent to we understand not what, is absurd. Therefore when any thing is declar'd to us which hath a Mystery contain'd in it, or that which is not, or cannot be apprehended by us; it is not the Mysteious part, but the Reveal'd part which we are required to give our Assent to. Thus, that the Bodily part of our Saviour was conceived in the Womb of the Virgin, by the Power of the Holy Ghost: This is what is reveal'd, and what we apprehend, and so is not a Mystery properly so call'd; and this is what we are requir'd to give our Assent to. But the Mysteious part, (*viz.*) How, or in What Manner the Holy Ghost did perform this Operation; This is not reveal'd, and this we cannot conceive or apprehend, and this we are not required to give our Assent to. So again; That there will be a Resurrection of the Dead; This is reveal'd, and this we apprehend or have an Idea of; and this we are requir'd, and can give our Assent to: But the Mysteious part, (*viz.*) How God by his Almighty Power will gather our scatter'd Dust, and unite it in the same Body; This is not reveal'd, and this we cannot conceive or apprehend, and this we are not requir'd, nor can we give our Assent to it. Besides; *Knowledge* and *Faith* stand upon the same Foot in this Matter, so that we may as properly be said to know Mysteries, as to believe them. Thus, that

one Grain of Seed is encreas'd into many; This is what we know, that is, we know that the Seed is cast into the Earth, and that it takes Root downward, and bears Fruit upward, first the Blade, then the Ear, then the full Corn in the Ear; This we know, that is, our Understandings by observation are inform'd of this Truth, by the external Sense of Seeing; and yet How Nature does perform it's Office in this Matter, is a Mystery, at least it is so to the greatest part of Mankind. For as it is not visible to their Sight, and as it is not reported unto them, so also they do not discover it by Reflexion, and consequently cannot properly be said to know it: And yet they do as truly, and as properly know this Mystery, as they do believe the Mysterious part of the Resurrection. From all which it appears, that Mysteries properly so call'd are not the Object of Faith: And that 'tis a most unjust misrepresentation, when Men who cannot perceive that such or such a particular Doctrine is at all revealed in Holy Scripture, are charged with denying their Assent to such Doctrine, merely because they cannot by their Reason comprehend *How* it can be.

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APPENDIX.

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*An Enquiry concerning the Use of
Reason in Matters of Revelation.*

BY Reason, or the Reasoning Faculty, I understand that Reflecting Power of the Mind, by which we are enabled to discern and judge of the Fitness or Unfitness, of the Agreement or Disagreement, of the Good or Evil, and of the Truth or Falseness of things.

This being premised, I say, That Reason and Faith are always to be exercised in their proper places, and never to interfere one with another, or be set up one above, or one against another : So that we are always to render to Reason the things that are Reason's, and unto Faith the things that are Faith's. There are some Truths which are in Reason's Province, and Faith has nothing to do with them, such as the first Proposition in Religion (*viz.*) That there is a God. When we would satisfy our Minds of the Truth of this Proposition, we consult our Reflecting Reasoning Faculty, as the only Means to obtain that Satisfaction by ; because to pretend to seek Satisfaction from the Written Word of God, is to take the thing for granted which we seek for (*viz.*) That there is a God. We must first be persuaded that God is, before we can be persuaded that he has any Revelation for us to seek Satisfaction from in any
Case

Case whatsoever. Now this is not a setting up Reason above or in opposition to Faith, but only an exercising of Reason in its proper place ; And it appears from what has been already observ'd, that Faith has nothing to do in this Matter. Again ; there are some Truths which are in Faith's Province, and Reason has nothing to do with them ; that is, Reason is not employ'd in satisfying our Understandings of the Truth of them ; Such as that the Bodily part of our Saviour was not produc'd into Being by the Agency of a Man, in the ordinary Course of Generation ; but by the Power of the Holy Ghost, in an extraordinary Way. Now if we would satisfy our Minds of this Truth, we must have recourse to Revelation, as the only Means to obtain Satisfaction ; it being utterly impossible for our Reflecting Powers to satisfy our Minds of the Truth of such Matters of Fact as this is. And this is not setting up Faith above or in opposition to Reason, but only an exercising of Faith in it's own Province. And it is plain that Reason is unconcern'd in this Matter.

But tho' there are some Truths, the Certainty of which depends wholly upon Revelation, and Reason is unconcern'd in perswading our Minds of the Truth of them ; yet still Reason is of a two-fold Use in all Matters of Revelation : *First*, to discern and judge of the Evidence that is given to prove any Revelation to be from God ; For if our Reason is not to be exercised in this Case, then we are laid open to every Imposer ; and it would be our Duty to receive every thing for Divine Truth, that the Reporter has the Impudence to affirm is the Word of God. *Secondly*, Our Reasoning Powers are to be exercis'd in discerning and judging what is the Mind of God contain'd in that Revelation which we own to be his Word ; for otherways we shall be obliged to contrary Practices, and to believe Contradictions, and the like : Thus, *Prov. 26. 4.* Solomon forbids, saying, *Answer*

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swer not a Fool according to his Folly, lest thou be like unto him : And then in the next *Verse* he commands, saying, *Answer a Fool according to his Folly, lest he be wise in his own Conceit.* Here we see, according to the strict Letter of the Text, we are forbidden and commanded the same Practice ; and if we may not exercise our Reason, to discern and judge of *Solomon's* Meaning in this place, we are under a Necessity of transgressing. Thus again in *Mar. 14. 22.* it is written, *Jesus took Bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to them,* (the Disciples) *saying, Take, eat ; this is my Body which is given for you ;* when at the same Time his Body was actually and visibly present with them in the performance of this very Action. Here we see, if our Lord's Disciples were not to exercise their Reason in discerning and judging what our Lord meant by these Words, but were to believe them in the Literal Sense ; then they were oblig'd to believe that it was his Body, when at the same time they saw it was not ; which would have been a Contradiction. From which it appears, that there is a Necessity for us to make use of our Reason in order to know the Mind of God contain'd in his Revelation.

Farther ; That we ought to exercise our Reason in discerning and judging what is the Mind of God contain'd in his Revelation, appears from this, (*viz.*) because Reason is planted in us for this End, and because we have no other Means to discern the Mind of God by ; so that without this, the written Word of God is but as so many Words or empty Sounds which to us are of no Signification. And if we should admit the Pope, or any other Man, or Body of Men to be the Infallible Interpreter of Scripture, (which we deny,) yet still the Case is the same ; because we must exercise our Reason to discern and judge what is the Sense and Meaning of their Interpretation. Or, if we should suppose a Divine Assistance, by which the Spirit of God informs us what is the Mind of God

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contain'd in his Revelation; then this Assistance or Work of the Spirit in us, is either an Assisting of our Reason in its Use and Exercise, as aforesaid; or else it is an Immediate Informing of our Understandings (by Inspiration or otherways, of those Truths which are contain'd in that Revelation. If the former, this is just the same with what I said, (*viz.*) It is in the Exercise of our Reason that we discover the Mind of God, as aforesaid; only here it is suppos'd, that God by his Spirit assists and helps our Reason in its Use and Exercise; and this he may do in all those Cases where Truth is discover'd by Reason, for ought that we know. If it be the latter; (*viz.*) by immediately Informing our Understandings (by Inspirations or otherways,) without the Use of Reason as aforesaid, then this is not a helping us to understand a former Revelation, but it is it self a New Revelation unto us; For tho' the Truths we are inform'd of, are such as are contain'd in (but not understood by,) the written Word; yet they are as much a New Revelation, unto us, as if they had not been contain'd in it. From hence I conclude, that it is in the Use and Exercise of our Reason that we discover the Mind of God contain'd in his Revelation; there being no other Means, (that we know of,) but this, for us to discover it by. And thus we see that Reason has it's Use, even in Matters of Faith.

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By the *Christian Church*, or the Church of Christ, I mean all those Men that are collected into a Body or Society upon the account of their chusing and embracing that Way and Method of serving and pleasing God which Christ or the Christian Revelation hath proposed and recommended to the World, which we call, The *Christian Religion*.

As to the Term *Unity* or *One*, when it is used simply, without being applied to any Subject; then its Sense and Meaning is most plain and easie to be understood; One being the original and beginning of all Numbers, all Numbers being no other than an Addition of several Unites. But when Unity is applied to any Subject, it must first be reduced to a Standard, before we can know what One of that Subject is, which Unity is applied to. Thus for Example, when we speak of One Pound Weight, a Pound must be reduc'd to a Standard: Just such a degree of Weight, (no more nor no less,) must be made the Standard of it, before we can know what one Pound Weight is; and the case is the same with every other Subject that Unity is applied to.

This being so; I say, that by the Unity of the *Christian Church* we do not mean the *Oneness* of the Parts in every respect; but only their *Oneness* in Those respects which Christ or the Christian Revelation hath made the Standard of Christian Unity. This Unity may be consider'd in two respects; *First*, Essential, that is, such a Union as is necessary to the Church's Being; and all Schism or Separation in this respect, is a Separation from the Body; so that whoever departs from this Essential Unity of the Body of Christ, such an one ceases to be a Part of that Body. *Secondly*, Integral; that is, such an Unity as is necessary to the Church's well-Being; and all Schism or Separation in this respect, is a Separation in the Body, so that whoever departs from this Integral Unity of the Body of Christ, that is, whoever are properly the Cause of such Division, such Persons are guilty of a Crime, (*viz.*) the breaking of that Unity which it is their Duty to maintain.

First, Of Essential Unity. This may likewise be consider'd in two respects, (*viz.*) Unity of Faith, and Unity of Subjection.

1st. **Unity of Faith**; that is, a **Unity of Assent** to the Truth of the Christian Religion, or an **Assenting** to those Truths which Christ or the Christian Revelation hath made the Standard of Christian Faith; or, to express it more fully and particularly, it is a believing or being perswaded, that the Divine Person which the Four *Evangelists* have given us the History of his Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension; that this heavenly Person is the Messiah or Christ whom God hath appointed to be a Mediator between himself and his sinful Creatures Mankind; for the discovery and manifestation of the Truth, to make known his Will, and to propose Terms of Peace and Reconciliation with Sinners, to assure them of Pardon and Acceptance upon their complying with those Terms, and of their certain condemnation upon their Non-compliance with them; to assure them likewise of their Resurrection from the Dead, and a future Judgment; of an everlasting State of Happiness to those that comply with, and an everlasting State of Misery to those who reject or neglect the Salvation offer'd: That this Divine Person, after he had proclaim'd and publish'd these good Tidings of Peace and Salvation to the *Jewish* Nation, and had confirm'd the Truth of his Mission by a Multitude of uncontrollable Miracles; he out of tender Love to, and for the Sake of Sinners, humbly and meekly submitted to the painful and shameful Death of the Cross, as an Act of Obedience to his Fathers Will, to Seal the Truth of his Doctrine, and to be a Peace-offering or Sacrifice of Atonement and Expiation for Sin: That God was so well pleas'd with his Son's Performance in this Matter, that he rais'd him from the Dead, and exalted him at his Right hand to be the Lord and Head of his People; to rule them by his Laws; to guide, support, and comfort them by his Spirit; to be a prevailing Intercessor with God for them; that God pardon's the believing Penitent

his sake, and that he shall judge The World at the Last and Great Day. This, or at least as much of this, as is necessary to subject Men to the Kingdom and Government of Christ, is (as I apprehend) the Standard of Christian Faith, and is one Essential Branch of Christian Unity. This, I say, is one Essential Branch of the Standard of Christian Unity, because this is absolutely necessary to constitute a Christian or a Member of Christ's Church; for no one can be a Member of Christ's Body the Church, till he is united or made One with Christ, and with that Body, in believing that which Christ or the Christian Revelation hath made the Standard of Christian Faith. It is not necessary, in order to make a Man a Christian, that he should be united or made one in Opinion in every Point, with every individual Member of Christ's Body; neither is it necessary to be one with them in any Point, except what Christ or the Christian Revelation hath made the Standard of Christian Faith; because nothing is really necessary, that a Man can be a Christian without. And as the believing the Standard of Christian Faith, is necessary to constitute a Member of Christ's Body; so whoever doth believe, or is One with Christ, and with his Body, in that Standard, is a true Christian, a true Member of Christ's Church, if that Unity of Faith be accompanied with Unity of Subjection, which is the other Essential Branch of Christian Unity.

2^{dly}. Unity of Subjection; That is, a willing Subjection to the Kingdom and Government of Christ, by making his Laws the Rule and Measure both of the Frame of a Man's Mind, and the Actions of his Life; a Submitting to the Will of Christ in avoiding what he forbids, doing what he commands, and patiently suffering (when call'd to it) for Truth and Righteousness sake. This, or at least a Purpose and Resolution do so, with an Actual Performance in the Main and principal Part of a Man's Actions, and with an humbling

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humbling Sense of his fault whenever he does other ways, is the Standard of Christian Subjection, because this is absolutely necessary to constitute a Christian or Member of Christ's Church. No one can be a Member of Christ's Body, who is not united to Christ by Subjection; and every one who is united to him by Subjection as aforesaid, (which supposes a Unity of Faith,) is a true Christian, because he is united to Christ, and to the Church, which is his Body, in all the Essential Parts of the Standard of Christian Unity. And whoever professes to be a Christian, to be a Member of Christ's Body, the Church, and is wanting in these or either of these, he is a Christian only in Name, and not in reality. And whoever Apostatizes with respect to these or either of these, excommunicates himself from the Body of Christ: That is, whoever renounces Christ, or whoever believes him to be the Christ or true Messiah, and yet withdraws his Subjection from him, and gives up himself to the Service of another Lord, Christ is no longer his Head, and he is no longer a Member of Christ's Body. And if he should have the Appearance of a Member, by a visible Profession, and an external Communion with the Body of Christ's Church; yet he is only a dead Member, which should be cut off; or rather he is a Member only in appearance, and not in reality. So then a Unity of Faith, and Unity of Subjection, is all that is absolutely necessary to the Being of Christ's Church: Whatever Divisions there may be in the Church in other respects, such Divisions may disturb it's Peace and Comfort, but they do not destroy it's Being.

Secondly, Integral Unity. This also may be consider'd in two respects, (*viz.*) Unity of Interest and Affections, and Unity of Communion in Christian Worship.

First, Unity of Interest and Affections. As the Church of Christ is, in the Christian Revelation,
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(*Rom. 12. 5. 1 Cor. 12. 12, 13, 25, 26, 27.*) considered as one Body, whose Members, to wit every individual Christian, have one common Interest to prosecute, (*viz.*) the Honour and Glory of Christ the Head, and the Comfort and Happiness of the Body, and of every individual Member of the same, both as to the Life that now is, and also as to that which is to come: So it is necessary to the Well-being of Christ's Church, that all its Members should be One in pursuing the One common Interest of the Whole. For tho' every particular Member may have a particular Interest of it's own, which it may pursue in conjunction with, and in subordination to the One common Interest of the whole Body, without hurt or prejudice to the Interest of that Body: yet it cannot set up any private Interest in opposition to the One common Interest of the Whole, without hurt or damage to the Body of Christ: And consequently whoever does so, is guilty of criminal Schism; because he not only fails of filling up the Relation which he stands in to the Body, but also acts against the Interest of, and to the hurt and damage of the Body: Which is highly criminal in any Member: This is the worst sort of criminal Schism in the *Christian Church*; because it does more hurt and damage to the Interest of the Body and of Christianity, than any other sort of Schism whatsoever: This was that sort of Schism which *St. Paul* charg'd the *Corinthians* with, *1 Cor. 1. 12.* One made an Interest for *Paul*, and another for *Apollos*; not in conjunction with, and in subordination to, but in opposition to the One common Interest of the Body of Christ. Nothing is more dishonourable, nor of worse consequence among Christians, than a departing from this part of the standard of Christian Unity. For when there is this Schism in the Body, when the Members are set one against another, when their Affections are alienated one from another, and the different Interests

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rests which they pursue clash with one another, and with the One common Interest of the Body of Christ; it has a fatal tendency to dissolve the great Bond of Christianity it self, (*viz.*) Unity of Faith, and Unity of Subjection; and consequently to the Dissolution of the Body of Christ, according to our Lord's own Observation, *Matt. 12. 25. Every Kingdom and House divided against it self, falleth.* This should make all Christians very careful not to make, or give occasion for, any Schism of this sort in the Church; and especially they that make the greatest Outcry against Schism in the Church in other respects, ought to take care not to be guilty of this worse sort of Schism themselves. Whereas on the other side nothing can be more for the Honour, for the Comfort, for the Happiness and Well-being of the Church or Body of Christ, than for all its Members to be united in their Interests and Affections. When they all love one another with a brotherly Affection; when every Member puts on a mutual Concern to promote the Honour and Glory of Christ, and the Comfort and Well-being of all the Members of that Body; when every one hath a fellow-feeling of each others Comforts and Afflictions, and esteems what is done to each of them as done to himself; This will make our *Jerusalem* beautiful in the sight of the Nations, and a Praise in the Earth. All other sorts of Schism in the Church will be of little Consequence, if this part of the Standard of Christian Unity is maintain'd; but the Church's Unity in lesser things will be of little benefit, where this is wanting. This should inspire all Christians, with a noble Zeal, to promote and maintain this part of the Standard of Christian Unity. This was that Unity in the Church, which Christ so particularly recommended, and press'd upon all his Disciples and Followers, *Joh. 15. 12, 17.* And that he so earnestly pray'd to his Father for, *Joh. 17. 11, 21, 22, 23.* Christ and his
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Father were One, as they were united in pursuing the same Design, (*viz.*) the Restoration and Salvation of Mankind. They were One in their Affections, in loving, and being beloved of each other. And he earnestly desired, that all who believ'd in him, should be One, even as he and his Father were One. One in their Interest, and One in their Affections. This was that noble Unity, which beautified the Primitive Church, *Act.* 4, 32. They were all of One Heart, and One Soul; One in their Interests, One in their Affections. Oh! that Christians would make all their particular Interests to give way and submit to the One common Interest of the Body of Christ; that they would lay aside all their Pride, Passion, Humour, and carnal Interest, which are the Seeds of Schism in the Church of Christ; and be of One Heart, and One Soul; that they would be One in their Interests, One in their Affections? Then would the Walls of our *Jerusalem* be Salvation, and her Gates Praise.

Secondly, Unity of Communion in Christian Worship. As the Church is One Body, which is united in Faith and Subjection to Christ it's One common Head; and hath One common Interest to pursue, (*viz.*) the Honour and Glory of the Head, and the present and future Happiness of all and every Member of that Body: And as they have all One common Father, One common Share and Fellowship in the Blessings of the Gospel, and One common Hope of the Heavenly Inheritance: So it is very just and reasonable, fuitable and agreeable, beautiful and commendable, that they should (if it could be) make but One Congregation, and with One Mind, and One Mouth glorify God, even the Father, thro' One Mediator, even Jesus Christ, by the help and assistance of the Holy Spirit. I say, If it could be, it would be very agreeable to that Relation which all Christians stand in to God, to Christ, and to one another;

another; to be united together in one Congregation in the Exercise of Christian Worship, as it is a Badge of their near Relation to God, to Christ, and to each other; and as it is a necessary Means to corroborate and strengthen all the other parts of Christian Unity. But this is what cannot be in this World; and That upon two Accounts: First, Distance of Place. Our Lord commanded that his Gospel should be preached to All Nations; From which it will follow, that as his Church is not to be confined to a particular Place, but may be in several Places very remote one from another at the same Time; so the uniting them in One Congregation in Christian Worship, will be very inconvenient to some, and impossible to others, upon the account of Distance of Place, let the Place of Worship be where it will. Secondly, Such a Communion of Worship in One Congregation, cannot be, upon the account of the Number of it's Members. When the Number of Christians is so great, as that at the Place of Worship all cannot be in the reach of the Ministers Voice, so as to hear him, and to joyn in the Christian Service with him, or to hear the Word of Exhortation from him; or when any other great Inconveniency takes place; then it is necessary, (to answer the Ends of Worship,) that the Church of Christ should be divided in that Particular, that is, should be branched forth into several Congregations, as the Distance of Place, and Multiplicity of Members, makes it necessary; that so the whole Body of Christ's Church may have the opportunity of discharging their Duty to God, to Christ, and to one another, and of reaping the Benefit and Comfort which flows from it, without any great Inconvenience to themselves in their worldly Circumstances. Now tho' the Church is thus necessarily divided into distinct Congregations, yet those Congregations are but One Body in Christ; One in Faith, One in Subjection; and they ought to be One

in their Interests and Affections, and to be so far One in Christian Worship, as that when they are absent from the Congregation which they are particularly related to, they ought to join in Worship with the Congregation they are then present with. And as the dividing of Christ's Church into several Congregations, is to arise from Necessity, and not from Choice; so when the Church is thus necessarily divided, every Christian ought to make a visible Profession of his Relation to God, to Christ, and to his Church, by uniting himself in Christian Worship with that Part of Christ's Church where the Place of his Abode is, and never to separate from it, so as to make himself a Member of another Congregation without a just Cause. For as the Church is thus necessarily divided into Parts, it must be the Place of abode that must determine which Part every Member is particularly related to. And as the Church or Body of Christ ought to be One in Communion, in Christian Worship; so no Congregation ought to make any other Terms of Church Communion than what Christ and the Christian Revelation hath made absolutely necessary to constitute a Christian, (*viz.*) such a Unity of Faith, and such a Unity of Subjection, as Christ and the Christian Revelation hath made the Standard of Christian Unity: Because whoever comes up to those Terms, as he is a Member of Christ's Body, so he hath a Right by virtue of that Relation to hold Communion with that Body: And therefore whoever makes any other Terms of Church Communion than what Christ and the Christian Revelation hath made absolutely Necessary to constitute a Christian, if any Schism follows upon that account, those that impose such unnecessary Terms are justly chargeable with that Schism, and with disturbing the Church's Peace. Such Impositions have been one, and perhaps the Principal Cause of those Schisms that have so long prevail'd in the

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Christian Church, to the great Dishonour of Christianity: And if ever Peace and Unity in Christian Worship be restored in the Church, it will be when the Terms of Communion are reduced to their Original Standard. This Unity in Communion in Christian Worship, I say, is necessary to the Church's Well-being, as it is a Badge of Christians Relation to God, to Christ, and to one another, and as it is a Means of corroborating and strengthening all the other Parts of Christian Unity. When Christians unanimously meet together to humble themselves before God, to seek his Face, to call upon his Name, and to set forth his Praise; when they acknowledge their Relation to Christ, his Love to them, and their Subjection to him; when they inform and instruct, uphold and strengthen, quicken and encourage, comfort and help one another, in the Way to the Heavenly Kingdom; which are the Parts of Christian Communion: This has a natural tendency to bring down the Blessing of God upon the Church, and to build up and strengthen its Members in the Faith and Practice of the Gospel. Whereas on the other side, when Christian Communion in Worship is broken to pieces, sad Experience shows the fatal Consequences of it. Instead of pursuing the one common Interest of the Church, each pursue the Interest of their Party; instead of loving one another with a Brotherly Affection, they hate and malign, and persecute one another; instead of building up one another in Faith and Holiness, they watch for each others Halting, and are glad of any Occasion of reproaching their Brethren. This should make all Christians very careful not to give the least occasion for this sort of Schism in the Church, because of the dismal Consequences that attend it; and to use their best Endeavour towards the healing of the Church's Breaches.

Thus have I shewn wherein the Unity or Oneness of the Church of Christ consists, when That Unity is reduced to the Christian Standard, (*viz.*) Unity of Faith, Unity of Subjection, Unity of Interest and Affections, and Unity of Communion in Christian Worship. The two first are Essential, as necessary to the Church's Being; The two latter are Integral, as necessary to its Well-being.

Objections with their Answers.

Object. 1. Allowing that no Christians have any just Authority to make any other Terms of Church Communion than what Christ, and the Christian Revelation have made necessary to constitute a Christian; yet if Men in this Case do what they have no Authority for, by making unnecessary Terms of Christian Communion, it will notwithstanding be criminal Schism to separate from such Communion, except the Terms required are sinful; because all Christians are in duty bound to bear with, and submit to, and depart from their Right for Peace's sake.

Before I return an Answer to this Objection, I think it proper to premise, That as it is a general Rule or Law of Equity, to render to all Persons and Things their due, and not to rob or lessen one, out of Respect or Compliment to another; so we ought in Justice to render to Peace its due. And as Peace is a very valuable thing; so we ought to prefer it before all other things that are less valuable, and to make all other less valuable things give place to it, when they cannot be enjoy'd together. But as Gold would be bought too dear, if a Man should make such an unwise Bargain as to give his more precious Life for it; so, tho' Peace is a very valuable thing, yet it may be purchas'd at too dear a rate: For if a Man should give in exchange for
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Peace, that which is more valuable than it, he would not act the part of a Wise Man: And therefore I say, By the same Rule of Equity, we ought to render to all other things (as well as to Peace,) their due: And if there are other things that are more valuable than Peace, such things ought in Justice to be preferr'd before it, and Peace ought to give place to all such more valuable things, when they cannot be joyned together. For Example; Liberty, Truth, and Holiness are more valuable than Peace; Consequently they ought to have the preference, and Peace ought to give place to them. By Liberty I do not mean Liberty at large: For as to some particular branches of Liberty, they may be of less value than Peace. Thus if we should be restrain'd from a particular Mode or Fashion of Apparel, such a Restraint would be no real Damage to us; and therefore in this, and in all other Cases where the Restraint is of little or no Damage, we ought to prefer Peace before Liberty: Nay, in all Cases where Peace is the more valuable thing, Liberty ought to give place to it. But if Men's Liberty should be restrain'd in any of the more valuable parts of it; as, for Example, if People's Liberty should be restrain'd in the having, or in the Choice of their Consorts, so that a Man or Woman should be obliged to have such a Husband, or such a Wife, as others shall chuse for them, and impose upon them; in such a Case, Liberty is preferable to Peace, because such a Restraint would generally deprive People of all the Comfort of Life; and therefore in this, and the like Cases, Peace ought to give place to Liberty. Peace without Liberty, in the more valuable Branches of it, is but to be a Prisoner, in Fetters and Chains of Gold.

Again, I say, Truth is more valuable than Peace. By which I do not mean Truth at large. For tho' every Truth has an intrinsick Value in it self, when
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it stands oppos'd to Shadows and Falshood, and therefore upon that account we ought not to deny the Truth, nor subscribe to a Lye for Peace's sake; yet there are some Truths, the assenting to which, is of so little Consequence, that they are not worth disputing for, when that Disputation is destructive of Peace. Thus the Diameter of the Moon's Body, is just a certain Measure; This is a Truth, which the assenting, or not assenting to, is of so little Consequence, that it is not worth disputing for, when that Disputation is destructive of Peace; and therefore this and all other Truths, the assenting to which are of little Consequence, ought to give place, (in point of Disputation,) for Peace's Sake. But then there are Other Truths which are vastly more valuable than Peace; and therefore to such, Peace ought to submit. Thus, that there is but One Supreme Self-existing Independent Being (which we commonly call GOD,) This is a Truth, the assenting or not assenting to which, is of such vast Consequence, that it ought to be disputed for, tho' That Disputation be destructive of Peace; because the Truth disputed for, is vastly more valuable than Peace: And therefore in this, and in all other Case, where Truth is more valuable than Peace, Peace ought to give place to such more valuable Truths.

Again, I say, Holiness is more valuable than Peace. Holiness is the Beauty, the Glory, and Perfection of all Beings and Things, and is the most valuable of all that is valuable in things; and therefore all other valuable things, when they stand in competition with it, ought to give place to it; and consequently when Peace becomes detrimental to Holiness, it is to be put by and disregarded for Holiness sake.

This being premised, I answer, That every Christian is indeed in Duty bound, by the Laws of the Gospel, to bear with, and submit to, and to depart

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from his Right in many lesser Matters for Peace's sake; And consequently there may be some Cases whereing Christians ought not to depart from the Communion of the Congregation in which they are providentially placed, tho' unnecessary Terms of Communion are requir'd. But then I say, that there may be other Cases wherein Christians may lawfully depart from the Communion of the Congregation, tho' no sinful Terms of Communion are requir'd; and consequently such a Departure is not justly chargeable with criminal Schism. Thus when a Congregation indulges any of its Members in an open wicked Course of Life, and especially when the Pastors and Overseers of such Congregations live openly vicious, and are so far from shewing any signs of Repentance, that on the contrary, they boast of, and glory in their Wickedness; in this Case, after proper Means have been used, and Time and Patience have been exercis'd in waiting for their Reformation, and they will neither reform themselves, nor will the Congregation purge it self of them; then I think it very justifiable for Christians to withdraw their Communion from such a Congregation, (till such time as they will be reform'd,) in order to show to the World their abhorrence of such Practices, to make such Congregations asham'd of their Disloyalty to Christ, to keep themselves from being infected by them, and to vindicate the Christian Church at large from the Scandal and Reproach which such a disorderly Congregation brings upon it: In such a Case I think Separation is justifiable in the Sight of God, and consequently is not criminal Schism. For as on the one Side, a Man's joyning in Worship with the worst of Men, does not make him guilty of their Crimes, except he is some way or other accessory thereto; so on the other side, Separation from such Men, is not a Separation from Christ and his People, but only a Separation from those whom Christ esteems and will treat

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as Enemies. And if some Christians will continue to own their Christian Relation, by continuing to hold Communion in Christian Worship with such Men, who in reality are no part of the Body of Christ; 'tis no good Argument that others ought to do so also. And in this Case, tho' there is an accidental Separation from the Members of Christ's Body; yet as those that Separate, do not withdraw their Communion upon Their Account; so the Separation ought not in justice to be charg'd upon Them, because they are not properly the Cause of that Division; but it is caus'd by those Christians who chuse to continue in Communion with Christ's Enemies, rather than to withdraw themselves with Christ's Servants. 1 Cor. 5. 11. *I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any Man that is call'd a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat.* 2 Thes. 3. 6, 14. *We command you, Brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the Tradition which he receiv'd of us.— And if any Man obey not our word by this Epistle, note That Man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*

Again, when any Congregation take a Liberty to cut off Persons from their Communion, which in the judgment of Charity are united to Christ, and to his Church, in all the Essential parts of the Standard of Christian Unity; and excludes them for no other Cause but their Non-compliance, (either in Opinion, or Practice, or both,) with such things as they declare they cannot in Conscience comply with: In this Case I think Christians may very justly withdraw their Communion from such Congregations, and joyn in Communion with the excluded Person or Persons; because as such an Exclusion is not properly an Excommunication or cutting off the excluded Person from the Body of Christ, (such Persons being as much, and as truly a

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Part of Christs Body after such Exclusion, as before,) but only a Schism or Division in that Body; so it is the Excluders, and not the Excluded, which are the criminal Schismatics in that Case. And therefore, as no Christian ought to bear any Part in, nor consent to such an Exclusion of his Brethren, but on the contrary to protest against it; so, when such an Exclusion is exercised, he may lawfully, (as I think,) retain his Communion with the Innocent, and withdraw it from the Guilty; that is, he may continue in Communion in Christian Worship with the excluded Member or Members, and withdraw from that Congregation which excluded them; because the former are the Innocent, and the latter the Criminal Schismatics in such a Division.

Again, when the Christian Worship is in part so corrupted, as that a Christian which is sensible of such Corruptions, cannot with a good Conscience heartily joyn in, and bear his part in such corrupted Parts of Worship; when these Corruptions have been laid open, and complain'd of; and when Time and Patience have been exercised in waiting for a Reformation, without being able to obtain it: I think in such a Case Christians may separate from such corrupted Worship, and consequently from the Congregation in which it is exercised, without being guilty of criminal Schism. I say, When the Christian Worship is in Part so corrupted. For if that Worship was corrupted in the Whole, and throughout, in all the Parts of it; in such a Case a Christian could not joyn at all with such a Congregation, without joyning in their Corrupted Worship: and therefore, supposing some Parts only of such Worship was thus corrupted, in this Case, tho' a Christian could joyn in those Parts which are uncorrupted, and withhold his Assent to, and bear no Part in that which is corrupted, and so may joyn in such a Congregation without Sin; yet forasmuch as the being present at such corrupted Worship, has

an appearance of Assent, to other Persons, tho' we do not really assent to it in our Selves; and forasmuch as such corrupted Worship is a Scandal to Christianity, and a Stumbling-block in the Way of Unbelievers; and forasmuch as such Congregations will not be reform'd, I think Christians, as a Necessary Vindication of themselves, to clear the *Christian Church* from Scandal, and to take away all Offence from Unbelievers, may lawfully separate from such Congregations, and joyn with those who preserve the Christian Worship in its Purity. And in this Division, the being chargeable with Schism will rest upon the Heads of those who have thus corrupted the Christian Worship, and not upon those who have separated from it; because it is the former, and not the latter, which were properly the Cause of that Division.

Again, I say, When the Christian Worship is clog'd and loaded with such a Burden of Ceremonies, as eats out the Life and Spirit of true Devotion; in this Case, tho' these Ceremonies are not directly Sinful in themselves, yet forasmuch as they put by and hinder one great End of Christian Worship, (*viz.*) the Edifying of the Church; and forasmuch as they render the Worship it self contemptible and prejudice the Minds of considering People against it: in such a Case also, I think that Christians may lawfully withdraw their Communion from such a Congregation, to enjoy the Benefit of Christian Communion themselves, by joyning with those whose Worship is adapted to answer that End, to remove Contempt from the Christian Worship, and Offence from others, without being guilty of criminal Schism. 1 Chron. 16. 29. Psal. 29. 2. and 96. 9. *O Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness.*

Whether there are any other justifiable Causes of Christian Separation, I shall not say; I think these before mention'd are such, and that the being chargeable with Schism in these Cases will rest upon the Heads
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That Peace and Unity are very desirable things, I allow; but that they should be made a Stalking-Horse to bring in or to uphold those Corruptions and Abominations which have taken place in the Christian Church, is very unreasonable and vile. That it is the Duty of all Christians to do every thing that is proper towards the preserving and restoring Peace and Unity in the Body of Christ, I am fully perswaded. But if at any time some Christians should be so weak as to think that there is just Cause for them to separate from their Brethren in Christian Worship, when in reality there is not; and so should make a breach in Christian Communion, when they ought not: yet it is a very severe Sentence to pronounce Men Damn'd upon the Account of such a Separation, if in the main of their Lives they maintain the Spirit and Practice of true Christianity. And as this rash Judgment is not justified by the Christian Revelation, so the great Zeal and Pains which have been exercised to propagate and establish the aforesaid Principle, (*viz.*) that all Schismatics are damn'd, have serv'd to no other Purpose, (as I can see,) but to support that unnatural and unjust Authority which some Clergy have exercised over their Brethren.

Ob, that it would please God to dispose the Minds of Christians, by his Grace, to remove from the Christian Worship all things which give Occasion of Offence, which are the Foundation and Cause of Schisms and Divisions in the Body of Christ; to lay aside Humane Inventions, and Humane Impositions, and return again to the Original Standard of Christian Communion and Christianity! that it would please him to work in the Minds of all Christians, such Humility and Meekness, Goodness and Peaceableness of Spirit, that they may bear with, and forbear one another; give to, and forgive one another; submit to,

and comply with one another, so far as is agreeable to, and for the Honour of the Gospel, and for the Peace and Edification of the Church of Christ ! May it please the Good God to unite all Mankind in Faith and Subjection to his Son Christ Jesus, and all Christians to one another by the holy Bonds of Love and Peace, thro' him who loved us, and died for us, even Jesus Christ his Son, and our Saviour. Amen.

Objec^t. 2. The Jewish Church was corrupted both in Doctrine and Worship, and Practice ; and yet we do not read of Any Separation from it, but That of the Samaritans, which was so far from being lawful, that our Lord condemn'd it : Yea, tho' the Jewish Church was thus corrupted, yet our Lord joyn'd with them both in the Synagogue and Temple-Service.

Ans^r. As it is a Question, whether the Synagogue Worship was by the Special Appointment of God, or whether it was founded upon the Nature and Reason of the Thing ; that is, whether they had any express Law which did require that Service, or whether the Consideration of the Reasonableness and Usefulness of such a Practice was the Argument or Reason of their setting it up : So likewise it's Matter of Question, whether every Man was oblig'd to joyn in this or that particular Synagogue, or whether he was at liberty to joyn with any Synagogue which he thought best.

Again ; it is a Question, Whether there was a particular Rule or Form of Worship of Divine Appointment, which all Synagogues were to Worship God by ; or whether the Members of every particular Synagogue were left to Worship God according to such a Form as Reason should direct.

These are Questions, which till they are answer'd, (which is hard to be done,) the Objection, with respect to the Synagogue-Worship, is needless ; because upon a Supposition that the Synagogue-Worship was found-

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founded only upon Reason and Discretion, the same Reason which did induce a Man to joyn in any Synagogue upon the account of the Reasonableness and Usefulness of such a Practice, if that Synagogue should so far corrupt themselves, or their Worship, as that Communion with them became Irrational and Unprofitable; then, I say, The same Reason which did induce a Man to joyn with them, would induce him to separate from them; and the latter would be as just and lawful as the former; because they Both rest upon the same Foundation, (*viz.*) the Rationality and Usefulness of the thing.

Again; upon a Supposition, that every Man was at liberty to joyn in what particular Synagogue he should think best; if he at any time separated from one Synagogue, and joyn'd in, or used his Interest to set up another; in such a Case his Separation would be no more than the lawful Use of his own Liberty.

Again; If the Members of every Synagogue were left to themselves to worship God by such a Form as Reason should direct, and if every particular Synagogue in the Jewish Nation had a particular Form of Worship different from all others; in such a Case Men's worshipping God by a different Form would not be a Breach of Unity in the Jewish Church, because their Unity did not at all consist in it, nor depend upon it.

But allowing the utmost that can be desired in the present Case, (*viz.*) that the Synagogue-Worship was of God's special Appointment, and that there was a particular Synagogue, which every Man was particularly related to; and likewise, that there was a particular Form of Worship, of *Divine Appointment*, which all Synagogues were to worship God by: I say, Allowing all these, then it will follow, that so long as the Members of each Synagogue did continue to walk in God's Fear, that is, in the Main of their

their Lives walked in Obedience to God's Law; and so long as they did continue to worship God by that Form, and in that Way which God had appointed; so long Union to, and Communion with that Synagogue was a Duty, and Separation from them was a Crime. But if that Synagogue did depart from the Rule given, and did worship God in no Way contrary to what he had expressly appointed; or if the Members of that Synagogue should cast off God's Fear, and so should break off their Relation to him, by ceasing to be his People; in these Cases I think Separation would be justifiable in God's Sight; because in such a Case a Man did not separate from the Rule of his Duty, but only from the Transgression and the Transgressors of it.

As to the Practice of the *Jews*, whether they did thus corrupt the Synagogue-Worship, or not; or if they did, whether any of them made any such Separation or not, is not at all to the purpose; because the *Jews* Practice is no Rule for Christians to walk by, any farther than as the Nature and Reason of the thing makes it so. And as to our Lord's joyning in the Synagogue-Worship, it is of no consequence in the present Case, except it can be proved that the particular Synagogues he joyned in were corrupted as aforesaid; and supposing they were, yet our Lord might think it proper upon some Occasions to go in to such Synagogues, that so he might have the Opportunity of preaching the Gospel to them.

Again, I say, That as the Temple-Service was by the special Appointment of God, so God gave particular Directions for the performance of it, both with respect to the Service it self, the Place where it was to be perform'd, the Time when, the Persons that were to minister in that Service, &c. And as God had been thus Particular in this Matter, so it was all Peoples Duty to Worship God in the Way, at the Time and Place, and by the Ministry of those

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Persons which he had thus appointed: God's Law was the Rule which they were to act by; And when they went contrary to that Rule in performing such Service, at such Time or Places, or by the Ministry of such Persons as was otherways than God had requir'd and appointed; This was Criminal: And this was plainly the Case of the *Samaritans*, whose Worship our Lord condemns: For as they had departed from God's Temple and Altar, and had set up a Temple and Altar against it, and in opposition to it; so therein they became Transgressors of God's Law; and therefore our Lord told the Woman of *Samaria*, That they worshipped they knew not what; For as their Worship was in Disobedience to God's Law, so it could not be to his Honour; and consequently they honour'd or worship'd they knew not what. And whenever Christians do as the *Samaritans* did, (*viz.*) transgress God's Law in their Separation, then they will be chargeable with their Crime: But alas, what is this to those who are so far from transgressing any Law of God in their Separation, that they only separate from the Transgression, and from the Transgressors of his Law.

Object. 3. The Body or Church of Christ is a Society which consists of two Parts; (*viz.*) Governours, and Governed; and the Unity of this Body consists in the Governed's holding Communion with, and Subjection to those that are the proper Governours of that Society. And the proper Governours are such, and only such, as have receiv'd a Commission by Succession from Christ for the exercise of that Government; and the Members of that Society as Governed, are such and such only as have been admitted into it by the true and proper Governours thereof, and have not been excluded from that Society by those Governours. And consequently, as the Being and Continuing in that Society depends upon the Will and Pleasure

Pleasure of those who are the proper Governours of it; so whoever withdraw their Communion or Subjection from them, upon any Pretence whatsoever, are guilty of criminal Schisms. And as those Governours giving an Admission into this Society, gives those that are admitted a Being as Members in that Body; so whoever they cut off from that Society, are really cut off from the Body of Christ.

In Answer to this Objection, I observe, *First*, If in the Term, *Church*, Christ is included, then I allow that the Church consists of two Parts, (*viz.*) a Governour, and Governed; which, in the Figure of a Body, answers to the Head and the Members: Christ, and he only, being the Head or Governour, and all obedient Believers being the Members or Governed in this Body. But if from the Term, *Church*, Christ is excluded, then I say, that in the Christian Church there are not two such Parts. In That Body, all and every one are the Members, and no one is the Head: All and every one are govern'd, and no one is a Governour, properly so called: Because Christ hath been so far from giving a Commission to any Member or Members of his Church, to exercise Rule and Dominion over others, that on the contrary he hath set them all upon a Level in point of Authority, and hath strictly forbid that any such Authority or Dominion should be exercised in his Kingdom. Consequently there are no such Governours in the Christian Church, who have derived a Commission by Succession from Christ, for the exercising such Rule and Government as the Objection supposes. For the proof of this Observation see *Matt. 23. 8-11*, *But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are Brethren; and call no Man your Father upon the Earth; for one is your Father which is in Heaven: Neither be ye called Masters; for one is your Master, even Christ: But he that is greatest amongst you, shall be your Servant.* Chap. 20. 25-27,

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Jesus called them unto him, and said, To know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise Dominion over them, and they that are Great exercise Authority upon them: But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your Servant. Luk. 22. 24--26, There was a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the Greatest; and he said unto them, The Kings of the Gentiles exercise Lordship over them, and they that exercise Authority upon them are called, Benefactors: But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the Younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. Here we see, that as our Lord consider'd his Church under the Figures of a Family, and a Kingdom; so he forbids any Member or Members of this Family to assume to themselves any Authority or Governing Power over the other Members thereof, upon a Religious Account; (I say, On a Religious Account; because Christianity doth not take away those Natural or Civil Relations which Men stand in one towards another, such as Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, and the like,) For tho' the Scribes, and Pharisees had taken upon them an Authority, and lorded it over their Brethren, binding and laying upon Men heavy Burdens, and grievous to be born, and not moving them with one of their Fingers, Matt. 23, 4; And tho' in all Earthly and Temporal Kingdoms throughout the Gentile World, there were Princes and Great Men which did exercise a Ruling Power over the People, (and those of them which did rule well, were esteemed publick Benefactors;) yet as Christs House was not to be an Earthly or Temporal, but a Spiritual House or Kingdom, so herein it was to differ from all other Kingdoms, that it was to have no Visible Head or Governour; Christ reserving the Governing Power wholly to himself, without substituting

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ting any other to exercise it in his stead : *It shall not be so among you, (saith our Lord;) One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are Brethren.* The Master of the Christian Family; the Governour, Head, or King in the Christian Kingdom, is Christ, and he only; and all the Members of that Family, all the Subjects of that Kingdom are Brethren, fellow Servants of the same Master, and fellow Subjects to the same Prince. Consequently, in the nature of the thing, no Member or Members of this House can have any legal Authority over others, except Christ did give and convey an Authority to them; which he hath been so far from doing, that on the contrary he has strictly forbid any Governing Power properly so called to be in his Church, (as I observ'd before.) And as Christ foreknew That Antichristian Power which would take place in his Church, almost assoon as it should have a Beginning, in opposition to that single Headship which was lodg'd in him by his Father; so he took several Occasions to warn his Disciples and Followers against it. And he repeats his Monition, *Matt. 23.8--10. Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are Brethren. Neither be ye called Master; for one is your Master, even Christ.* As if he had design'd this to be a Witness to all succeeding Ages, that it was his Will, (with respect to Authority,) that there should be no such thing as Greater or Less in his Church. Old and Young, Rich and Poor, Learn'd and Unlearn'd, Jew and Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond and Free, in this respect, are all one in Christ Jesus. If any will be greater than others, it must be in his greater Labour and Service, in ministring to the Church.

Having thus fully proved the foregoing Observation; from hence I think I justly infer, first, That if there is any thing necessary to be determin'd for the Convenience and Edification of the Church, which

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which Christ hath not determin'd, nor given Direction for, (such as the Place where, or the Time when Christian Communion is to be exercis'd in Christian Worship, or the like,) such a Determination does not properly belong to any particular Member or Members, but to the whole Congregation, the Majority being always esteemed as such. And forasmuch as the Body of Christ's Church is of necessity divided into distinct Congregations thro' Distance of Place, and Multiplicity of Members,

I necessarily infer, (from the foremention'd Observation,) *Secondly*, That all such distinct Congregations are independent one of another in the determination of those things which Christ hath not determin'd; and if they determine different from one another, their different Practices founded upon such different Determinations, are not in the least Measure a Breach of Christian Unity. For Example; If a Congregation at *Salisbury* should determine, that their publick Worship shall begin at Nine in the Morning, and at Two in the Afternoon, on the Lord's Day; And if a Congregation at *Marlborough* should determine that their publick Worship shall begin at Ten in the Morning, and at Three of the Clock in the Afternoon, and should practise accordingly; such a different Practice would not be a Breach of Unity in Christianity; because the Unity of Christ's Church does not at all consist in it, nor depend upon it. Again, if the Congregation at *Salisbury* should determine that their Devotion shall be branched into short Collects; and the Congregation at *Marlborough* should determine that theirs shall be in one continued Form of Prayer; or if these two Congregations should think fit to express their Addresses to God in different Terms; or if they should differently determine in any other respect of like kind; their different Practices in such Respects would be no Breach of Christian Unity; because,

because, (as I said before,) That Unity doth not all consist in it, nor depend upon it. And if Either, or Both of these Congregations should endeavour to impose each of their Determinations upon one another, and so should give Rules to each other, in these, or the like Cases; and if they should be offended with each other for their Non-compliance herein, and should hate, and reprobach, and persecute one another thereupon; as such Offence, and the Consequences of it, would be very unjust and unreasonable in it self, so it is not at all chargeable upon such Non-compliance, but wholly upon that Unnatural, Unjust, and Anti-christian Authority which Either or Both of them have assumed to themselves.

I infer, *Thirdly*, That if Ignatius, or Polycarp, or Clement, or Paul, or any, or all the Apostles, or an Angel from Heaven should preach any thing contrary to what Christ hath preached in this respect; we are not to receive it, Gal. 1. 8, 9. because we are sure no one can know the Mind of Christ better than he knew it himself. As to those places in the Epistles of the Apostles, where it is required that Christians should obey and submit to those that have the Rule over them, (which is spoken of Christian Pastors; because it is said, They watch for their Souls, as those that must give an Account,) as in 1 Cor. 16, 16; and Heb. 13, 17. These places do not in the least contradict Christ's Precept in this Case; be the Apostles in these, and the like Directions intended no more, (as I apprehend,) than that Christians should yield Obedience to the Laws of Christ, which these Pastors, (according to their Office,) acquainted them with, and pressed upon them; like as our Saviour pressed Obedience to the Scribes and Pharisees, Matt. 23. 2, 3. *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses Seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe and do, (that is, whatsoever they from the Law shall*

shall discover to be your Duty,) That observe and do; but do not ye after their Works; for they say, and do not: So in like manner the Apostles require Christians to obey and submit to those that have the Rule over, (or rather that have the Care of) them; that is, whatsoever they from the Gospel shall discover to, and press upon us as our Duty, we are to submit to and obey.

I infer, *Fourthly*, That if any Member or Members of the *Christian Church*, shall assume to themselves an Authority or Ruling Power over their Brethren; we are not oblig'd by the Laws of the Gospel to submit to it any otherways than as it is our Duty in lesser Matters to depart from our Right for Peace's sake; such an Authority being properly a Branch of Anti-christianism, because it is an assuming of that Dominion or Headship which the Supreme God the Father hath confer'd upon his Son, according to what the Prophet *Isaiah* foretold, *Chap. 8. 6.* *That the Government should be upon his Shoulders.* And tho' Christ had so particularly and frequently given a Charge that there should be no such Power exercised amongst his People; yet sad experience shew'd that it began to take place in the Apostolical Age. Anti-christ, or that Anti-christian Power which grew to such a height in after Ages, had its Rise or Beginning even in the Days of the Apostles; as appears by *2 Thess. 2. 7.* where *St. Paul* saith, that the Mystery of Iniquity did already work, and in *3 Joh. 9. 10.* *St. John* saith, *I wrote unto the Church, but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the Pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not; wherefore, if I come, I will remember his Deeds which he doth, prating against us with malicious Words; and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the Brethren, and forbiddeth those that would, and casteth them out of the Church.* Here we see how sadly some in the *Christian Church* had transgress'd Christ's Command, and had invaded his Prerogative even in the times

times of the Apostles: Some of the Members of Christ's Body had assumed the Authority, and put themselves in the Place of their Head. This was Anti-christ in whomsoever it was found, whether in a greater or lesser Degree. Let Men be never so good in other respects, yet if they assume an Authority over their Brethren, or if they teach, encourage, or promote such an Authority in Christianity, they are *so far* Anti-christian. And as this unnatural unjust Dominion of some of the Members of Christ's Church began in the Days of the Apostles, so it soon advanced it self to a great Height, as appears from the Writings of those earlier Ages of the Church. Some of the Clergy lorded it over God's Heritage, endeavouring to subject Christ's Subjects to their own Wills, who (in propriety of Speech) were no more than fellow-Members with them in the same Body, and fellow-Subjects to the same Prince; and, with respect to Office, they were the Church's Servants, or rather their Representatives, because in their Ministerial Acts they acted in behalf of the People, and represented them in what they did.

If it should be objected, That the foremention'd Texts, where Christ saith, That they should call no one their Master, for One was their Master, even Christ; And that (with respect to the Authority which was exercis'd among the *Gentiles*) it shall not be so among you: If, I say, it should be objected that these Texts, as they were spoken to the Apostles, so they were *confin'd* to them; and have no Relation to the Body of Christ's Church; and consequently that foremention'd Observation is not at all prov'd.

To this I answer, That there is no manner of foundation for this Objection. For as we cannot be sure that these Words were directed to the Apostles only, because there might be other of Christ's Followers there present, for ought that we know; so supposing they were spoken to Them only, yet it was spoken to them in the Capacity of Disciples, and consequently to all that stand in that Capacity to Christ, which

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are all his People in all Ages. But farther I say, Supposing it was spoken to them, consider'd as Apostles, then this proves the Observation yet stronger; because if the Apostles might not be called Masters, that is, might not assume any Authority over others, much less may any other Christian do so. Besides, the two Reasons which are given for the foremention'd Prohibition, are both general; *One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are Brethren.* These Reasons are not applicable to the Apostles only; but to all Christians: Christ is Master to all other Christians, as well as to the Apostles; and all other Christians are Brethren to one another, and to the Apostles. And as these Reasons are General, so is the Prohibition which they are made the Reasons of. Moreover, the Persons spoken to by Christ, are consider'd in the Capacity of a Kingdom, in opposition to the Kingdoms of the *Gentiles*: *The Kings of the Gentiles exercise Lordship, but it shall not be so among you*: Which is as much as if Christ had said, My Kingdom shall have no Likeness or Resemblance to the Kingdoms of the *Gentiles* in this respect. But the Apostles consider'd as Apostles, were not the Kingdom of Christ, and consequently as such were not intended by our Saviour; and so the Objection is of no force.

If it should be farther Objected, that our Lord did give to his Apostles an Authority over others, as appears from his Words to *Peter*, Mat. 16. 19. *And I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.*

Before I return an Answer to this Objection, I premise, *First*, That as the Gospel-Dispensation is set forth under the Character of a Kingdom, and is call'd *The Kingdom of Heaven*; so That Good Tidings, or the Doctrine of Life and Salvation which is
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propos'd to Mankind by it, is call'd a *Treasure*, *Mat. 13. 44, 52.* *The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto Treasure hid in a Field.*—Every Scribe that is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, is like an *Houſholder*, which bringeth out of his *Treasure* things new and old. *2 Cor. 4. 7.* *We have this Treasure in earthen Vessels, &c.*

Secondly, It is usual for Princes and great Men to commit the Keys or Keeping of their *Treasure* or Valuable Things to the Care and Management of some Person or Persons, either to be kept, or disposed of, as they shall direct them. Thus the *Eunuch* that Philip baptiz'd, was said to be a *Man of great Authority* under *Candace Queen of Ethiopia*, who had the Charge of all her *Treasure*, *Act. 8. 27.* And thus the Apostles of our Lord were call'd *Stewards*, because he had committed to their Trust the Doctrine of the Gospel, *1 Cor. 4. 1.* *Let a Man so account of us, as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God.* *1 Tim. 11. 12.* *According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my Trust; and I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the Ministry.*

Thirdly, The laying any thing upon the Consciences of Men, is call'd a *Binding*, or laying Burdens upon them. Thus *Num. 30. 2, 3.* *If a Man vow a Vow unto the Lord, or swear an Oath to bind his Soul with a Bond.—If a Woman also vow a Vow unto the Lord, and bind her self by a Bond.* *Mat. 23. 4.* *For they (viz. the Pharisees,) bind heavy Burdens, and grievous to be born; and lay them on Men's shoulders.* *Chap. 11. 29, 30.* *Take my Yoke upon you,—for my Yoke is easy, and my Burden is light.* Here I observe, that as the laying any thing upon Men's Consciences, is call'd a *Binding* That upon them which they are oblig'd to thereby; so on the other side, to take away or disengage Men from any thing which their Consciences have been bound up to, is by the same Rule a *loosing* them from that to which they were before oblig'd.

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This being premis'd, I answer : Our Lord did not in the Text refer'd to, confer any Authority, properly so call'd, upon *Peter*, and the rest of the Apostles; but only committed to their Care and Trust, that precious and valuable Treasure, the Doctrine of the Gospel, which they were to dispence to both *Jew* and *Gentile*; and in so doing, they were not only to bind upon the Consciences of Men, those Laws and Duties which he had appointed; but also to loose them from those Bonds which either the Law of *Moses*, or their superstitious Teachers had bound upon them: Assuring them withal, that so far as they were just and faithful in this Trust here on Earth, so far their Actions should be approved and justified in Heaven: whatsoever they did on Earth, would be allowed of, and approv'd by him and his Father. As much as if he had said; *Peter*, thou hast confess'd the Truth, I am That very Christ which thou acknowledgest me to be; and as I have gone up and down *Judea*, proclaiming the good News of Life and Salvation to the *Jews*, and am going to finish the Work which is appointed me of my Father; so I do constitute thee and my other Disciples, to be my Messengers and Ministers to all Mankind; and to your Care and Trust I do commit that precious Treasure, the Doctrine of the Gospel, to be by you faithfully deliver'd to the World; in which you shall bind upon Men's Consciences all those Laws and Duties that I shall appoint, and shall loose them from all those Ceremonial and Superstitious Observances that hitherto they have been bound down to; and whatsoever you do in the due execution of this Commission, I will stand by you, and justify you in it. This I take to be the Meaning of our Lord, and to be a full Answer to the foregoing Objection.

If it should be farther urg'd, that our Lord gave unto his Disciples a Power of remitting and retaining Sins, *Joh. 20. 23.* *Whosoever Sins ye remit, they are*

remitted unto them ; and whosesoever Sins ye retain, they are retained.

I Answer ; The Remitting and Retaining of Sin, must (as I apprehend) signify one of these three Things. Either *First*, a Power to discharge Men from the Guilt of those Sins they have contracted, and consequently from the Condemnation they are expos'd to ; and to retain Men's Sins, so as that it shall be wholly out of the guilty Person's Power to obtain That Pardon without their Consent. Or *Secondly*, a Power to remove, or retain the temporary Punishment which some Men are under for their Sins, when That Remitting or Retaining shall be necessary to the Promotion of Christ's Kingdom. Or *Thirdly*, a Promise or Assurance, that all those who come under those Terms or Prerequisites of Pardon and Forgiveness, which the Apostles in Christ's Name were to propose and publish to the World, such Men's Sins should certainly be remitted unto them ; and that all those who do not come within these Terms, their Sins should certainly be retained, that is, they should be charg'd upon them to their Condemnation.

It could not be the *First* of these: Because the penitent Believer is assured of Pardon from God's Word ; and therefore as the Apostles remitting of such a Man's Sin, could be no real Benefit to him, because he would be pardoned whether his Sins be remitted by them or not ; so on the other side, their retaining of such a Man's Sin, could be no real Damage to him, because such a Retaining could not possibly make the Promise of God of none Effect, nor exclude such a Man from God's Mercy. Again ; the Impenitent are likewise assur'd of certain Condemnation from God's Word ; and therefore as the Apostles retaining of such Men's Sins, could neither make That Condemnation greater, nor more certain ; so neither could their remitting of them, possibly pre-

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vent it : and consequently there was no such Power of remitting and retaining Sin, in this Sense, given to the Apostles. Besides, that the Apostles did not understand our Lord's Words in this Sense, is evident ; because they did not in the exercise of their Ministry pretend to such a Power, but on the contrary they refer'd Men to the Mercy of God for the forgiveness of their Sins. Thus *Act. 8. 22. Peter said unto Simon Magus, Repent therefore of this thy Wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the Thoughts of thine Heart may be forgiven thee.* 2 Tim. 4. 16. *At my first Answer no Man stood with me. — I pray God that it may not be laid to their Charge.*

As to the *Second* : Tho' it may be true, that the Apostles had a Power to remove from Men upon some Occasions the temporary Punishments laid upon them for their Sins, when That Removal was necessary for the promotion of Christ's Kingdom ; And tho' this Sense of the Words may seem likely to be the Meaning of our Lord, from the preceding Words, (*viz.*) *He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; whosesoever Sins ye remit, &c.* For the receiving the Holy Ghost in this place most probably signifies That extraordinary Ability of working Miracles, and the like, for the Confirmation of the Gospel ; and the remitting of Sin in this Sense was a part of that Power ; and these Words immediately follow'd the other, as if this had been one main Instance thereof. Tho' therefore, I say, this may make it seem likely, that the remitting of Sin in this Sense was intended by our Lord ; yet notwithstanding I think, with Submission, that this was not the Sense and Meaning of his Words ; because in this Sense the latter part of it is not concern'd, (*viz.*) the Retaining of Sins. And therefore,

I say, *Thirdly*, It is most likely, that by remitting and retaining of Sin, our Lord intended a Promise or Assurance of the Remission of Sin, to all those who should come under those

Terms of Pardon and Forgiveness, which the Apostles in Christ's Name were to propose to the World; and of the retaining of Sin, to all those who would not come under those Terms. Our Lord gave his Disciples their Commission to preach the Gospel, *ver. 21. As my Father hath sent me, so send I you*: He likewise promis'd them That Help which would be necessary to the performance of that Work, *ver. 22. He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost*. And then he assur'd them, that they were not going to impose upon the World; but on the contrary, whoever should be wrought upon by their Preaching, to forsake their Sins, and turn to God in Christ Jesus; such Men's Sins should certainly be remitted unto them; and whosoever would refuse to comply with their Proposal, such Men's Sins should certainly be retained, *ver. 23. As much as if he had said, As my Father hath sent me into the World, to propose Terms of Peace and Reconciliation to Sinners; and as I have faithfully discharg'd that Trust, in preaching them to the Jews; so I do appoint and send out you, to make the same Proposals to all Mankind: And as this is a Work both of great Importance and Difficulty; so you shall shortly receive the Holy Ghost, that is, you shall be endued with Power from on High for the proof of your Mission, and to enable you for this performance: And I do assure you withal, that whosoever shall come within those gracious Terms of Pardon, which you are to propose, such Men's Sins shall certainly be remitted unto them; and all those Men who shall refuse to comply with that gracious Offer, such Men's Sins shall certainly be retain'd, that is, they shall be charg'd upon them to their Condemnation. And as this is a rational and just Interpretation of the Text, and is it self a Truth which is undeniably evident in the Gospel, so it is most likely to be the Sense of our Lord's Words, because it is agreeable to what the rest of the Evangelists*

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have given an Account of upon the same Occasion; (*viz.*) What our Lord said to his Disciples after his Resurrection, and before his last Ascension, touching this Matter. Thus, *Mat. 28. 19, 20. Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them, in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the End of the World.* Here *St. Matthew* gives an Account of the Commission which our Lord gave his Disciples, and likewise his Promise to them of his continual Presence with them, to qualify them for, and to assist them in the due execution of it. *Mar. 16. 15, 16, 17. Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature; he that believes and is baptiz'd shall be sav'd, and he that believes not shall be damn'd; and these Signs shall follow them that believe, in my Name shall they cast out Devils, they shall speak with new Tongues, &c.* Here *St. Mark* gives an Account, (in other Words,) of what *St. Matthew* had done before, (*viz.*) The Commission given to the Apostles, and the Promise of Assistance which was to accompany the execution of it. And to This *St. Mark* adds what *St. Matthew* had omitted, (*viz.*) an Account of what should be the Issue and Consequence of their Preaching, with respect to the future State of those they were to preach to: Those that receiv'd the Gospel, and submitted to it, should be sav'd; and those that rejected, or neglected it, should be damn'd: Or, as *St. John* has it, *The ones Sins shall be remitted, and the others shall be retained.* Thus we see that *St. Matthew*, *St. Mark*, and *St. John*, do all give an Account of the same thing; only they express it in a different Manner one from the other. With respect to the Commission it self, *St. Matthew* expresses it thus, *All Power is given unto me in Heaven, and in Earth, go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c.* *St. Mark* expresses it in these words, *Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature, &c.* *St. John* hath it

it thus, *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.* The Promise that was given for their Encouragement, St. Matthew expresses thus, *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the End of the World.* St. Mark hath it thus, *These Signs shall follow them that believe, in my Name shall they cast out Devils, they shall speak with new Tongues, &c.* St. John expresses it thus, *He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.* As to the Issue and Consequence of their preaching, (which St. Matthew omits,) St. Mark expresses it in these Words, *He that believes, and is baptiz'd, shall be saved; and he that believes not, shall be damn'd.* St. John expresses it in these Words, *Whosoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever Sins ye retain, they are retained.* And if what these three Evangelists have left upon Record in this Case, was spoken by our Lord at three different times (as some think,) yet it alters it not; because as in every of these it was but a Repetition of the same Commission, so in all probability it was but a Repetition of the same Promise and Ground of assurance which was annexed to that Commission. Agreeable to this likewise is what St. Luke takes notice our Lord said to his Disciples, (before his last Ascension,) touching this Matter; *Luke 24. 46. That Repentance, and Remission of Sins, should be preached in his Name among all Nations.* And agreeable hereunto also was the Practice of the Apostles in the execution of the aforesaid Commission; as appears by *Act. 2. 38. Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins.* Chap. 3. 19. *Repent and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out.* Chap 5. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his Right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give Repentance to Israel, and the Forgiveness of Sins.* Thus I think it appears what is the Import of the Words *Remitting and Retaining of Sins*, and likewise that there was no Authority or Dominion, properly so called, given to the Apostles by it.

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Again further, *Secondly*, I observe, Tho' the Apostles of our Lord acted as his Ambassadors in going up and down the World, inviting both *Jews* and *Gentiles* to believe in Christ, and subject themselves to his Kingdom and Government; in the Exercise of which they became Beautiful and Glorious, and were highly honoured for their Works Sake in the Eyes of those who were converted to Christ by their Means, according to the Prophecy of *Isaiab*, Chap. 52, 7; Yet they did not assume in their Preaching or Practice, any Authority or Dominion, properly so called, over the Members of Christ's Church, either in point of Faith or Practice. All the Authority which they used or pretended to, was only a requiring those they proselyted to Christianity, publickly to own their Relation to Christ and his People, by being baptized; exhorting and commanding them to submit themselves to Christ their proper Governour, by conforming their Minds and Lives to his Doctrine, Precepts and Example; reprovng those that acted contrary to their Profession, and joyning with their Brethren in disowning their Christian Relation to them when they persever'd in their Disobedience to Christ, and continued impenitent after all proper Endeavours had been used for their reclaiming. I say, The Apostles did not assume any Authority over their Brethren in their Preaching, but on the contrary they disclaim'd all such Authority; 2 Cor. 1, 24, *Not for that we have Dominion over your Faith, but are helpers of your Joy.* Chap. 4, 5. *We preach not our selves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and our selves your Servants for Jesus sake.* Which is as much as if St Paul had said; We the Apostles, in the exercise of our Ministry, do not set up our selves as your Rulers and Governours, and require you to submit your selves to us as such; but on the contrary we, as Christ's Ministers, endeavour to subject you to his Kingdom, and require you to submit your selves to

to his Government only: And as for Us, we pretend to nothing more than to be Christ's Messengers to you, and your Servants in the Business of his Kingdom.

Again I say, The Apostles did not in their Practice assume any Authority or Dominion over the Church of Christ. Thus, *Acts 6*, When a Difference arose in the Church, that was occasion'd by a partial Distribution of the Peoples Bounty, which gave occasion for the Institution of the Office of Deacons, (or Overseers of the Poor,) in the Church at *Jerusalem*; the Apostles did not give Direction in this Affair by way of Authority, but from the Reason of the thing; *ver. 2, 3, 4*. *Then the twelve called the Multitude of the Disciples unto them, and said; it is not Reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve Tables; wherefore, Brethren, look ye out among you seven Men full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom, whom we may appoint over this Business; but we will give our selves continually unto Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word.* Here we see that the Institution of the Office of Deacons in the *Christian Church*, was not founded upon a particular Command of Christ, nor yet upon any Authority which he had lodged in his Apostles to act as they pleased in his Church; but it was founded on the Nature and Reason of the thing. The Apostles were commission'd to preach the Gospel; Now it was not reasonable that they should leave this necessary and important Work, which concern'd the Welfare and Salvation of Men's Souls, to be employ'd about a less necessary Work, in taking care of Men's Bodies. Again, tho' the taking care of the Poor, was less necessary than the preaching of the Gospel; yet still it was a Work that was necessary to be done: And as that which is every one's Work, is put off from one to another, and so is generally neglected; this made it necessary that some should be appointed to take care of the Poor; that so neither They nor the Gospel might be
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neglected. And the Apostle's Reasoning was so just in this Case, that the Multitude approved of their Opinion, and chose seven Men and set them before the Apostles, who in the Church's behalf pray'd to God for his Blessing upon the Persons and Services of those they had chosen; and laid their Hands on them, a Custom used in those Eastern Countries, as a Notification of the Persons set apart, and as a Sign of their Desire that the Blessing of God might descend upon them; *ver. 5, 6. And the saying pleased the whole Multitude, and they chose Stephen, &c.*

Again; When there arose a Dispute at *Antioch*, Whether the Gentile Christians should be Circumcised and keep the Law of *Moses*, *Acts 15*, the Apostles did not in this Case assume an Authority of deciding the Question, nor yet of determining the Church's Practice herein; but only by Reason and good Argument, they shewed that the Gentiles were under no such Obligation: Neither did the Church suppose that the Apostles had any such Authority; for then there would have been no dispute in the Case; But when the Dispute was mov'd at *Antioch*, and had been largely debated in the Church there, and they had not come to a Determination on either side, (tho' *Paul* and *Barnabas* were present with them, and were engaged in the Debate,) they thought it proper to send to the Church at *Jerusalem* for their Judgment in this Matter, and to see whether they could offer any thing which might bring it to an Issue. Which when it was proposed to the Apostles, and Elders, and Brethren at *Jerusalem*, and much had been said on each side, *Peter* undertook the Argument, and shewed from what had been done in the Case of *Cornelius* and his Gentile Friends, that it was the Will of God, that in the *Christian Church* the Gentiles should have equal Priviledges as the *Jews*, tho' they had no part in the *Mosaick Dispensation*, nor were any way subject to it. And the Reason he

gives for this, is, because in the Case of *Cornelius* God gave unto the Gentiles, tho' in Uncircumcision, the like Gifts as he did unto the *Jews*, putting no Difference between them, but purified the *Gentiles* Hearts by Faith, even as the *Jews*. From this Reasoning *Peter* drew a double Inference; *First*, That their urging this Matter so stiffly, was a tempting God to lay a Yoke upon the Neck of the *Gentiles*, which the *Jews* themselves were not able to bear: *Secondly*, That by the Grace of Christ the *Gentiles* should be saved, that did not observe *Moses's* Law; as well as the *Jews*, that did. *Peter* having given such a clear and pressing Instance of the Grace of God to the *Gentiles*, in that he had admitted them to equal Priviledges with the *Jews*, tho' in uncircumcision; and having drawn so just a Conclusion from it, that they should thro' the Grace of Christ be saved, tho' they were no way under, nor subject to *Moses's* Law; He was seconded in this Argument by *Paul* and *Barnabas*, who gave a variety of Instances of like kind, and shewed what special Miracles God had wrought among the *Gentiles*, by their Ministry, and consequently that they were Sharers in the Grace of the Gospel, tho' they were no way subject to *Moses's* Law. *Paul* and *Barnabas* were likewise succeeded in the Argument by *James*, who shewed out of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, that God had foretold, (*Amos* 9. 11.) That as he would build again the Tabernacle of the House of *David* which was fallen down, so this should prepare a way for the Election and calling of the rest of Mankind, and that God's Name should be called upon by the *Gentiles*; (that is, Men in Uncircumcision; for the Term *Gentiles*, is put in opposition to the *Jews*; so that for God's Name to be called upon by the *Gentiles*, is for it to be called on by Men in Uncircumcision;) and consequently, according to this Prophecy, the *Gentiles*, as *Gentiles*, which came home to God under the Kingdom of the Mess-

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Messiah, were own'd by him as his People: From which it follows that the *Gentiles* were no ways oblig'd to observe *Moses's* Law, because they were God's People without it. *James* having thus strengthened the Argument urg'd by *Peter*, for the *Gentiles* Non-observation of *Moses's* Law; he brings the Matter to an Issue, by advising, that the *Gentiles* should not be brought under that heavy Yoke; but only he judged it proper, in the present Case, that the *Gentiles* should restrain their Liberty in some things, wherein the Restraint could be of no real Damage to them, to cut off offence from the weak *Jews*, who were very tenacious with respect to Blood. *James* likewise advis'd that they should be cautioned to restrain themselves from eating things offer'd to Idols, when the using their Liberty would make others to offend. He farther advis'd, that the *Gentiles* might be warn'd against Fornication, a Practice which they had hitherto looked upon as Innocent.

The Matter being thus fairly debated by the Body of Believers at *Jerusalem*; and *Peter*, *Paul*, *Barnabas*, and *James* having clearly shew'd, both from Fact, and from what was prophesied in the Old Testament, that the *Gentiles* as *Gentiles*, or in a state of Uncircumcision, were own'd as God's People, and received into Favour and equal Priviledge as the *Jews*; the Apostles then and Elders, with the whole Church, came to a Conclusion, that they would send an Epistle to the Brethren at *Antioch*; in which Epistle they first blamed those that had urg'd the putting the *Gentiles* under *Moses's* Law, and represent them as subverters of Men's Souls; then they excused themselves from having any Part in the aforesaid Imposition; then they inform'd them, that they had examin'd this Matter fully, being assembled with one Accord; and had sent the Issue of their Consultation by the hand of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, Men who had shew'd their Sincerity and Steadfastness in the

Faith, by Hazarding their Lives for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. They had likewise sent *Judas* and *Silas*, who should give them an Account by Word of Mouth. And as they had proceeded in this weighty Point with the utmost Sincerity, so they trusted that Christ's Promise of the Assistance and Guidance of the Holy Ghost was made good to them in this Particular; and therefore they address'd them thus, *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to Us, to lay upon you no other Burden than these (few) necessary things, &c.* Which is as if they had said; We have fully consider'd your Question, and it appears evident to us, that the *Gentiles* are no way obliged to observe *Moses's Law*: But forasmuch as it is the Duty of all Christians not to give Offence to, but to bear with the Weakness of their Brethren; therefore we advise, being as we trust hereunto moved by the Holy Ghost, that ye abstain from Meats offer'd unto Idols, lest your Liberty in that respect should embolden any weak Brother to eat the aforesaid Meats in Conscience of the Idol, or lest it should Minister Occasion to others to slander you as Idolaters: We likewise advise, that ye abstain from things strangled, and from Blood, lest your Christian Liberty in this respect should give Occasion to your weak Brethren of the believing *Jews*, (who are very tenacious of forbearing to eat Blood,) to esteem you as profane and wicked, and so be guilty of Uncharitableness towards you: We farther, and finally advise you to abstain from Fornication, and all Bodily Defilement, as that which is forbid by the Christian Religion, tho' when you were in your Infidel State you esteem'd it as no Crime: These things if you follow our Advice in, you will do well. Farewell.

Here we see that the Apostle's Direction to the Church at *Antioch*, was not founded upon any Authority which they had received from Christ, but
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from the Reason of things. From hence I think it just to infer, that the Apostles did not pretend to confer such an Authority upon others, which they had not received nor durst exercise themselves.

The like may be said concerning the Instituting the Office of Deaconesses, otherwise called Widows. For as the Enemies of Christianity took hold of every Occasion to reproach and slander the Followers of Christ, in order to prejudice the Minds of Unbelievers against the Christian Religion; so they charg'd them with Lewdness in debauching those young Women whom they converted to the Faith. Now to cut off all Occasion for this false and unjust Slander, the Apostles, (in all probability, with the Advice and Approbation of the Brethren,) appointed that some Ancient grave Christian Women, who were of good Report, should be set apart, to instruct in the Principles of Christianity, those Women that were proselyted to the Faith.

The like may be said concerning the Institution of Pastors, otherwise called Bishops. For as it was the Duty in general of all Christians, from that Brotherly Relation in which they stand one towards another, to promote and set forward the Spiritual Good and Welfare of all and every Individual Member of Christ's Church, so far as it properly and decently came within the Compass of their Power; and consequently it was every ones Duty to teach and instruct, to exhort and counsel, to admonish and reprove, to quicken and encourage one another, as occasion and opportunity should require: So sad Experience shews, that, what is every ones Duty, is usually put off from one to another, and so is generally neglected, (as I observ'd before.) This made it necessary that some Persons should be set apart to watch over the rest, whose Business it should be to see that every one under their Care walked agreeable to the Laws of Christ, and to use
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their Endeavour that they might so do. And as it was the Duty of Christians to hold Communion in Christian Worship, this made it necessary (to prevent Confusion,) that some Persons should be chosen to minister in Christian Congregations, to act for, and to be the Mouth of the People in their Religious Assemblies, and to perform all publick ministerial Acts. This being the Case; the Apostles, (probably with the Advice and Approbation of the Brethren,) appointed that Elders, Pastors, or Bishops, (which, by *Tit.* 1. 5, 6, 7, and other places, I take to be the same Office,) should be chosen in every Congregation, for the Ends and Purposes aforesaid; and charged those that were set apart for this Office, to take heed to fulfil their Ministry, that so they might give a good Account of the Stewardship they were entrusted with. I say, As the Office of Deacons was not founded upon any Institution of Christ, nor any Authority which the Apostles had received to act as they pleased in the *Christian Church*, but only from the Nature and Reason of the thing, and from the Circumstance the Church was then in; So in like manner, seeing we have no intimation in the New Testament of Christ's particular appointing the Office of Deaconesses, or Bishops, or of the Apostles receiving Authority to act as they pleased in this Affair; from hence I conclude, that the Apostles acting in those Matters was not by an Authority lodg'd in them, any farther than it was their Duty to settle things so as did appear to them and the Brethren to be for the Welfare, Edification, and Comfort of the Church. And forasmuch as Christ had promised to be with them when they were in the faithful Discharge of their Duty, they trusted that his Promise was made good to them, and that they had the guidance and assistance of the Holy Ghost, when they were faithfully and honestly employ'd in promoting the Interest of Christ's Church or Kingdom; and so they esteemed what

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what was done by them, as done by Christ, or by the Holy Ghost; because they believed that Christ did afford them the assistance of the Holy Ghost, and that Christ did approve of what they thus did upon mature Deliberation, and good Reason, as if he had done it himself. Thus St Paul charged the Elders or Bishops of *Ephesus*, that they should take heed unto themselves, and to all the Flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers, to feed the Church of the Lord which he had purchased with his own Blood, *Act. 20. 28.*

If it should be Objected, that upon these Principles the Christian Priesthood is annihilated, and that Pastors under the Gospel are not the Ordinance of God, but only the Creatures of the Church.

I Answer: The Christian Priesthood is not at all annihilated by these Principles. For if the Term *Priest* be used in a *Qualified* Sense, (*viz.*) as signifying a Person set apart to minister in Holy Things; to be the Mouth of the Church in praying to God, and praising his Name; and to represent and personate the Congregation in all Church-Acts; then every Christian Pastor is a Priest, and consequently all those that are set apart to the Pastoral Office are the Christian Priesthood. But if the Term *Priest* be used in a Gospel-Sense, (*viz.*) as signifying a Person chosen out of the World to be to the Praise and Glory of God, to present himself a lively Oblation, and to offer up spiritual Sacrifices unto God; then every Christian is a Priest, and consequently the whole Body of obedient Believers are the Christian Priesthood, *Rom. 12. 1. 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9. Rev. 1. 6. Chap. 20. 6.* And if the Term *Priest* be used in such a Law-sense, as denoting a Person set apart to offer up a Sacrifice of Atonement, or Peace-offering, and to make Reconciliation for Sin; then Christ, and he only, is a Christian Priest. Consequently the Christian Priesthood, in this Sense, is wholly lodg'd in his Person;

Person; it being Christ, and he only, who offer'd up himself once for all, as a Sacrifice of Atonement for Sin, and is for ever sat down at the Right hand of God, to make Reconciliation for Sinners. *Heb. 2. 17. Chap. 7. 24—28. Chap. 9. 24—28.*

As to the latter part of the Objection, (*viz.*) that upon the aforesaid Principles, Pastors under the Gospel are not the Ordinance of God, but only the Creatures of the Church: Before I return an Answer, I think it proper to premise that the Ordinance of God may be consider'd in two respects; first, General or Natural; and secondly, Special or Reveal'd. By General or Natural, I mean, That general Law of Nature, or That Rule of Duty, which is founded in the Being and Relations, and so in the Reason of things. By Special or Reveal'd, I mean That Law or Rule of Duty, which is founded upon a Divine Revelation.

As to the first of these; I say, God is the Original Supreme free Cause of all things; and as such, he is the Author and Fountain of the Being and Relations of things; and consequently whatever the Being and Relations, and so the Reason of things makes necessary to be done, that must be the Ordinance of God; because as God is the Author of Nature, whatever becomes necessary by the Law or Ordinance of Nature, must be by a just Consequence the Law or Ordinance of God. Thus for Example, Eating, and Drinking of proper Food, at proper Times, and in a proper Measure, is the Ordinance of God, because the Nature and Reason of things makes the Use of these a Duty, as they are necessary to the Support and Comfort of Humane Life. Thus again, St. *Pau*' faith, that Magistracy or the Exercise of a regular Government in Human Society is the Ordinance of God, *Rom. 13. 1.* because the Nature and Reason of things makes the Use of these a Duty, as they are necessary to the Support and Well-being of Humane Society.

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As to the Ordinance of God in the Second Respect, I say, As God hath been pleas'd to lay some Obligations upon his Creatures, besides those that are laid upon them by the Nature and Reason of things; and as God is pleas'd to make a Revelation of his Will in this respect; so whatever Obligation Mankind is laid under of this Sort, such Obligations are the Ordinance of God; and they are so in a Special Manner, because God hath in a particular and Special Manner laid them upon his Creatures. Thus for Example, God commanded all the Male *Jews* that were in *Canaan*, which were capable of travelling, and were not necessarily prevented, to appear at Three particular Times in a Year at the Tabernacle or Temple. Now as this Obligation was not founded upon the general Law of Nature, or the Reason of the thing, but only upon the Arbitrary Pleasure of God; and as this was made known to them by Revelation, so this I call a Sepecial Ordinance of God: Not that it was more the Ordinance of God than the other; for in that respect they were alike, it being equally his Will that both of them should be submitted to.

This being premis'd; I answer, If by the Ordinance of God is meant God's Special and Particular Appointing of the Pastoral Office in the *Christian Church*, or his Particular Appointing the Persons that shall exercise that Office; in neither of these Cases are the Christian Pastors the Ordinance of God in this Sense as I know of. If any shall be pleas'd to assert that they are, I hope they will act so justly in this Case as to prove what they assert. We have no Account in the Christian Revelation, that either the Pastoral Office, or those which were to exercise that Office, were of God's Particular and Special Appointment; and therefore I durst not make such an Assertion. But as Eating and Drinking are the Natural or General Ordinance of God, because the Nature and Reason of things makes the Use of these a Duty, as
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they are necessary to the Support and Comfort of Humane Life ; And as Magistracy is the Ordinance of God in a General or Natural Sense, because the Nature and Reason of things makes the Use of these a Duty, as they are necessary to the Support and Well-being of Humane Society ; and because Reason, which is God's Gift, discover'd it necessary for the Peace and Well-being of such Societies ; and Men thus guided by Reason, (or rather by God, who is the original Fountain from whence Reason flows,) instituted and appointed it for the Ends aforesaid : So in like Manner the Pastoral Office is in this General or Natural Sense the Ordinance of God ; because Reason discover'd to the Apostles and Brethren, that it was necessary to the Edification, Comfort, and Well-being of the *Christian Church* ; and because they, thus guided by Reason, (to which we trust was added the promised Guidance and Assistance of the Holy Ghost,) instituted and appointed the Pastoral Office for the Ends aforesaid.

As to what is said, *Eph. 4. 11. He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, &c.* This plainly relates, not to the Instituting of these as Offices in the Church, nor yet as chusing Persons to exercise such Offices, but only to the extraordinary Effusion of the Holy Ghost, which was pour'd out upon the Apostles and Brethren on the day of Pentecost, for the carrying on of the Work of the Gospel, by enabling those on whom it descended, to perform the Work of Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, &c. That the Gift here refer'd to, was the extraordinary Effusion of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, is plain from *ver. 8.* where the Apostle quotes *Psal. 68. 8.* and applies it to the Ascension of Christ, and the Effusion of the Holy Ghost, as the Effect and Consequence of that Ascension : Wherefore he saith (*viz. David* saith, in the *Psalms* before mention'd,) when he (*viz. Christ*) *ascended up on high, he led Captivity captive,*

captive, and gave Gifts unto Men; ver. 9, 10. Now that he Ascended, what is it but that he also Descended first into the lower parts of the Earth? He that Descended, is the same also that Ascended up far above all Heavens, that he might fill all things, &c. This has an allusion to the Practice of Princes, who when they have triumphed over their Enemies, and are peaceably settled in their Kingdoms, they then exercise their Bounty in giving Gifts unto their People: So in like manner when our Lord had by his Death and Resurrection vanquish'd Death, and him that had the Power of Death, that is the Devil, and was ascended up on high unto the Right-hand of the Father, *He gave gifts unto Men*, (*viz.*) the Working of Miracles, casting out Devils, speaking with Tongues, a large Measure of Knowledge, the Ability of Utterance, and the like; by which those that received them were enabled to exercise the Offices of Apostles, Evangelists, and Pastors, and to perform the Works of Prophesying, Teaching, and the like. That it is the Ability for the exercising the Offices and Performances mention'd in the Text, is, plain from these two Considerations: *First*, the *Apostolick Office*, and the Persons chosen for the exercising that *Office*, were both of them appointed and chosen before the Ascension of our Lord; excepting *Matthias*, *Paul*, and *Barnabas*, who were not chosen at Pentecost, but the first was before, and the other two after that Time; And consequently the giving Apostles, as mention'd in this Text, cannot signify the Institution of the Office, nor yet the chusing the Persons to exercise it, but only the Ability that was given forth for the Exercise of it. *Secondly*, Teaching was not a distinct Office, either in the *Jewish* or *Christian Church*; and consequently it could not be the Office, but the Ability for Teaching, which the Apostle refers to: And tho' Men in Office, as Apostles, Evangelists, and Pastors, did teach; yet these could not be refer'd to, because

they were all mention'd as well as Teachers. Besides, Teaching was exercis'd by those that were not in Office, both in the *Jewish* and *Christian Church*; and therefore it could not be the Office, but the Ability for Teaching, which *St. Paul* intends. The like may be said of Prophefying also. From all which it appears that it was the Ability, and not the Offices, which was given at Pentecost.

As to the Pastors being the Creatures of the Church; if we respect their Election, in this they ought to be so; that is, every Congregation ought to chuse their own Pastor; because, in the exercise of his Office, he is their Minister and Representative; and therefore in Reason they ought to have the Choice of him, agreeable to the Practice of the Church, *Acts* 6. 5. who chose the seven Deacons that were to performe them in the distribution of their Bounty: And how strange soever this may seem (to the Men of this Generation,) for the Body of Believers to chuse those that are to Minister in the Things of the Gospel; yet this is according to the most primitive Pattern, as appears in the Case of *Matthias*; who as he was set apart to be an Apostle to fill up the Room of the Traitor *Judas*, and was the first that was chosen to any Office in the *Christian Church*, except those that were chosen by Christ himself; so he and *Justus* were appointed by the Hundred and Twenty then present, upon whom they cast Lots, and prayed to God to direct it to the Person whom he should think best, and the Lot fell upon *Matthias*, *Acts* 1. 15 — 26.

Upon the whole I say, If we respect the Institution of the Office of Pastors, they may be said to be the Ordinance of God, in the Sense, and upon the Account before mention'd; And they may be said to be the Creatures or Ordinance of the Church, because it is the Church that elects or sets them apart for the Exercise of that Office: And thus Magistrates are said to be the Ordinance

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dinance of God, and also the Ordinance or Creatures of Men, *Rom. 13. 1. 2. and 1 Pet. 2. 13.*

Thirdly, I observe, That as the House or Kingdom of Christ, is not an Earthly, but a Spiritual House or Kingdom, *Joh. 18. 36. and 1 Pet. 2. 5.* so That which contracted the Relation between the Members and the Head of this Family, is not any external Profession, Priviledge, or Performance, but only the Union of each individual Member by Faith and Subjection to Christ the Head. For as Christ is the Head, so he is the Center of Unity to this Body ; the Relation of the Members to one another being founded in and depending wholly upon each of their Relation to the Head Christ : And therefore whoever is really united by Faith and Subjection to the Head Christ, such an One is a real and very Member of his Body the Church ; and whoever is wholly defective in these, or either of these, such an One is not at all a Member of Christ's Body, whatever external Profession, Priviledges, and Performances he may be related to. For the Proof of this, see *Mat. 3. 8, 9, 10.* *Bring forth therefore Fruits meet for Repentance, and think not to say within your selves, We have Abraham to our Father ; for I say unto you, That God is able of these Stones to raise up Children unto Abraham : And now also the Ax is laid unto the Root of the Tree ; therefore every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit is hewn down, and cast into the Fire.* *Chap. 7. 21. 22, 23.* *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name have cast out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful Works ? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, &c.* Here we see Christ disowns any Relation, that he ever stood in, to the Persons here mention'd, tho' they call'd him Lord, and prophesy'd in his Name *Chap. 12. 50.* *For whosoever shall do the Will of my Father which*

which is in Heaven, the same is my Brother, and Sister, and Mother. Chap. 16. 24. If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me. Chap. 18. 3. Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Luk. 6. 46. Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Joh. 1. 12. As many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name. Chap. 15. 14. Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Rom 11. 20. Because of Unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by Faith: Be not high-minded, but fear. Chap. 14. 17, 18. The Kingdom of God, is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost; for he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of Men. Chap. 2. 28, 29. He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is That Circumcision which is outward in the Flesh, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and Circumcision is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter; whose praise is not of Men, but of God. 1 Cor. 7. 19. Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping the Commandments of God. 2 Cor. 1. 24. For by Faith ye stand. Chap. 5. 17. If any Man be in Christ, he is a New Creature: Old things are pass'd away, behold all things are become New. Gal. 5. 6. In Jesus Christ, neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision; but Faith which worketh by Love. Chap. 6. 15. In Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision; but a New Creature. Here we see, that the only Ground and Foundation of a Persons Relation to the Body or Family of Christians, is his believing in, and Subjection to Christ the Head of that Family; and not in any external Profession, Priviledge, or Performance: and consequently it is not in the Power of any, or all the Subjects of this Kingdom, to add to it, or cut off any Member

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Member from it, any otherwise than as they are Instrumental in working an Unbeliever or wicked Persons Conversion to Christ, or a Believer's Apostacy from Christ the Head or Governour of this Kingdom. They may by some external Act own or disown a Persons Relation to this Body; but such Acts do not give Being to, nor take away that Relation. They may by Baptism own a Persons Relation to the Body of Christ, but this does not give Being to that Relation; because every Person which is really united to Christ by Faith and Subjection, is a real Member of Christ's Body; and he becomes so by virtue of his Union with, and Relation to Christ the Head of this Body; and therefore the Church's giving such a Person Baptism, does not give, but only declares his Relation to that Body: And if the Church should deny such a Person Baptism, this does not at all prevent, or hinder his Relation to that Body; but only they refuse to own a Relation, which is not in their Power to give, nor take away; Church-Membership wholly depending upon the Union and Relation of the Members to the Head, and not in any external Act of the Members one towards another. So on the other side, the Members of this Body may disown their Relation to a fellow-Member, by excluding him from their Company, in the Exercise of Christian Worship; but this doth not destroy that Relation, because whoever continues united to Christ by Faith and Subjection, continues to be a true and real Member of his Body, and Subject of his Kingdom, tho' he should be disown'd by all his fellow-Subjects, and should be excluded from Christian Communion by them all. And if a Person do really Apostatize from Christ, his Relation to Christ and his Church ceases by that Apostacy, tho' all the Members of that Body should continue to own their Relation to him.

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Here it may not be amiss to observe, that as Christ and his People are often set forth in the Scriptures under the Figure of a natural Body, whereof Christ is the Head, and his People the Members ; some Men have from hence concluded, that the natural Body answers in all respects to the Body or Kingdom of Christ : But this is a great Mistake, as will appear by and by. Christs Kingdom is represented and set forth by many Figures in the *New Testament*, (*viz.*) by a Vineyard, a House or Family, a Building, a Net that was cast into the Sea, the Sowing of Seed in a Field, and the like : But because it is more lively set forth by a Natural Body, therefore it is more commonly represented by that Figure, and not because there is an exact Parallel in every thing between the Figure and the Thing set forth by it. Thus, for Example, in the Natural Body the Members are united to the Head by their Union to one another in the Body which the Head is united to ; and they are separated from the Head, by being separated from those other Members to which they were immediately united. The Toes of a Man are united to one another in the Foot, the Foot to the Leg, the Leg to the Thigh, the Thigh to that which in a more strict Sense is call'd the Body, and the Body is united to the Head. Here we see that the Toes are not immediately, but remotely, united to the Head ; and if the other Members should join in War against the Toes, and should cut them off from the Foot, they would by this Means cut them off, not only from the rest of the Members, but also from the Head, because their Union with the Head depends upon their Union with those Members they are cut off from. But with respect to the Church of Christ, it is quite otherways ; For in that Body the Members are united to one another by their Union with the Head ; and they are separated, or their Relation as fellow-Members is cut off, by their being cut off from the Head Christ. And in this

Respect Christ's Church is more fitly compar'd to a Family, wherein the Relation of Fellow-Servants depends wholly on their serving the same Master; For tho' the rest of the Servants should disown the Relation, and should refuse to eat and drink with him who serves the same Master, this would make no Alteration in that Relation; because it depends not upon the Will and Pleasure of the Fellow-Servants, but wholly upon the Service and Obedience of him that serves. *Rom. 6, 16. Know ye not that to whom ye yield your selves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteousness.* And therefore it is wholly out of the Power of the Fellow-Servants, to make, or to destroy the Relation of a Servant in that Family, any otherways than as they are instrumental in prevailing upon a Person to submit or withdraw his Obedience to that Master. And this is the very Case in the Body or Family of Christ. The Members of this Body may be instrumental in prevailing upon Persons to submit, or withdraw their Subjection and Obedience from Christ; or they may publickly own or disown their Christian Relation to a Person; and this is all that they can do; for as to the making or destroying of Church-Membership, it is wholly out of their Power. Besides, in the Natural Body the Members are under the immediate Direction of the Head in all their Actings, except when they act by an Instinct of Nature, such as the starting of the Hand (or any other Part) at the sudden Prick of a Pin, the spreading forth the Hands when any one is like to fall, and the like; whereas in the Body of Christ's Church, it is quite otherways; For as in that Body the Members do very often act without, so they can and sometimes do act against the Direction of the Head. And therefore tho' in the Natural Body the Members cannot joyn in War, and cut off any Member from the Body, without having the Direction of the Head for

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such an Act ; yet it is plain that in the Body of Christ's Church, some Members can exclude others from their Communion, not only without, but against the Direction of the Head Christ. From the whole it evidently appears, that the Figure of a Natural Body, does not answer exactly in every Respect to the Thing set forth by it : And consequently tho' every Member, which is cut off from the Natural Body, is by that Act cut off, both by and from the Head ; yet when some Members of Christ's Church exclude others from their Communion in Christian Worship, this may not be a cutting off those they thus exclude, neither by, nor from the Head Christ : As in the Case of those Christians whom *Diotrephes* cast out of the Church, for practising their Christian Duty in receiving their Christian Brethren, 3 *Joh.* 9, 10.

If it should be objected against the foregoing Observation, that our Lord, in *Joh.* 3, 5, saith, *Verily, Verily I say unto Thee, except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God :* Where we see, that as Baptism, or being born of Water, is an external Performance ; so it is necessary to our Entrance into Christ's Church.

In order fully to answer this Objection ; I think it proper to premise what we understand by Baptism, or being born of Water.

Baptism, or to baptize, is to wash or plunge a Person under Water ; which Action is a Hieroglyphick Figure, by which is represented the great Religious Change the Person passes thorough, who is baptized. This Change is of two Sorts ; *First*, and and more principally, it is a Changing of his Religion, which supposes a Change of his Religious Relation ; That is, it is a quitting or putting off the Way and Method of serving and pleasing God which the Person was in the Use and Practice off, and an embracing or putting on a new Way for the obtaining of that End : and 'tis also quitting his former
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Religious Society, and uniting himself to others that he is now become related to. Thus when the Gentiles came over from Gentilism to Judaism, the Person which thus changed his Religion, was (as some say) baptized, that is, was washed or plunged under Water, to signify his Separation from, or putting off that Religion he was formerly in, and that Society he was united to; and his embracing that Religion, and his Relation to that Society, which he now professes to put on, and is united to. *Secondly*, it was used as a Sign or Representation of that moral Change of Heart and Life, which is commonly call'd *Repentance*. Thus when the Generality of the Jewish Nation were so corrupted in Heart and Life, as to have only the Name and outward Appearance of God's People, as at the Time of the Messiah's appearing in the Flesh; *John* the Baptist was sent to call them to Repentance, and so to prepare them for the Reception of the Messiah, and for an Entrance into his Kingdom. Those that hearkned to this Call, or at least pretended to do so, *John* baptized them, by washing or plunging them under Water, as a publick Sign of their being dead to that State of Sin they had hitherto lived in, and of their being alive to that Righteousness and Obedience which his preaching call'd them to; and so the Baptism of *John* was called, *the Baptism of Repentance*; that is, it was a Hieroglyphick Representation of that Change of Mind and Life, which the Person went thorough that was baptiz'd, as a necessary Preparation for the Reception of the Messiah.

This being premised, I observe, that as our Lord was born under the Dispensation of *Moses*, or, as *St. Paul* expresses it, *Gal. 4. 4. was made under the Law*; and as he was the Messiah and Minister of that Dispensation of Grace, which God was pleas'd to vouchsafe to the Body of Mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, which we commonly call *the Gospel*: So,

when he entred upon his Ministry, he was baptiz'd of *John* in *Jordan*, as an Hieroglyphick Representation, both of his own passing out of the Dispensation of *Moses* into that which follow'd it, and also of that Change which the State of things was to pass thorough in him. For as our Lord's being baptiz'd, could not be a Sign of a moral Change which he pass'd thorough, because there did no such Change take place in him; So I think it was more than a bare Sign of his passing out of the Dispensation of *Moses* into that which followed; (*viz.*) it was also a Sign of the passing away of the Dispensation it self, and of the coming in of that which he was the Minister of; And therefore when *John* would have excus'd himself from being the Minister of that Ordinance to Christ, our Lord press'd it upon him, because the Circumstance of Things required it. *Matt. 3. 15. Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all Righteousness:* Which is as much as if our Lord had said, allowing what thou sayest, that with Respect to the Relation we stand in to each other, it is more suitable for me to baptize thee, than that I should be baptized by thee; yet such Formalities must be overlook'd when Necessity takes place: I am now going to make that Change in the State of Things, which thou by thy preaching hast been preparing the People for; and am to be in my own Person the Beginning or Foundation-Stone in this Building: And as it is usual in Cases of this Nature, to give some publick Sign and Token thereof, so it becomes us to do all Things regularly, and according to Custom; and therefore thou must baptize me, as a Sign or Representation of that Change in the State of Things which I am now going to effect, and of my passing out of the Dispensation of *Moses* into that which follows it, as the Beginning or Foundation of that Change. And as our Lord was thus baptiz'd for the Ends aforesaid; so when he sent forth his Disciples

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to proclaim the good Tidings of Peace and Salvation to all Nations, both Jews and Gentiles; he appointed that all those which accepted of that Invitation, by believing in, and submitting to the Person, Message, and Kingdom of Christ, should be baptiz'd, as a publick Witness and Testimony of their Separation from, and coming out of that Religion they had hitherto been in, (whether the shadowing Religion of the Jews, or the false Religion of the Gentiles,) and out of that Body or Society they had been united to : And also as a Sign and Testimony of their accepting and embracing that Religion, which the Apostles in Christ's Name had invited and call'd them to; and of their Relation to Christ and his People to whom they by Faith and Christian Obedience were now united. It was likewise to be a publick Sign for all those that hitherto had liv'd in a State of Sin and Rebellion against God, of that Change of Mind and Life which they had passed thorough, by their coming out of a State of Sin into a State of Holiness. I say, It was a Hieroglyphick Representation of Repentance for those that had hitherto liv'd in a State of Sin : For as to all those that embraced Christianity who had antecedently lived, according to their Light, in the Fear of God, and working Righteousness, such as *Zechariah* and *Elizabeth*, *Joseph*, and *Mary*, *Nathaniel*, *Cornelius*, and such like; it could not be a Sign, of such a Change to them, because there was no such Change wrought in them upon their embracing the Christian Religion. They were holy and obedient before they became Christians; so that Baptism was not, nor could be a Sign of their Repentance, but only of the Change of their Religion, which it was chiefly and principally design'd to represent: For as to its being a Sign of Repentance, that was not universal, but only accidental and depended upon the State of the Person baptiz'd, as I have already shewn.

shewn. This being, as I apprehend, the true State of the Case; from hence we infer, *First*, that the most proper Subjects of Christian Baptism, are such as are profelyted from another, to the Christian Religion; because these pass thorough that Change which the Baptism of Christ is the chief and principal Hieroglyphick of. To which we may add, that as there are no other, but such, specified in the Commission; so there were no other, but such, baptized by the Apostles and first Preachers of the Gospel, that we have any Account of in the Christian Revelation. And as the baptizing of Infants; so the baptizing of those at full Age, who have been brought up in the Profession of the Christian Religion, and with good *Obediah* have feared the Lord, from their Youth, and so have not passed thro' either of the Changes before mentioned which Baptism is the Hieroglyphick of; I say, It is a Question, (which I should be glad to see thoroughly answer'd,) Whether the baptizing of such has any Foundation in the Nature of the Thing, or in Christianity; and consequently whether either of these are the proper Subjects of Christian Baptism.

Secondly, I infer from the foregoing Observation, that Baptism did not contract a Relation betwixt the Person baptiz'd, and Christ and his Church; but only it was a publick owning, and a visible Sign of a Relation already contracted: For as Faith in Christ, and Subjection to him, (or at least a sincere Purpose to be subject to Christ's Government,) was antecedent to Baptism; and as that Change was antecedent, which Baptism was the Hieroglyphick of; so consequently the Person baptiz'd was united, and so related to Christ and his People, antecedent to Baptism; and therefore Baptism could not contract that Relation. Indeed as Christ commanded all that were profelyted to the Faith, publicly to own their Christian Relation by being baptized; whoever was
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thus profelyted, and was satisfyed that Christ had given such a Command, and would not be baptized when he might, * such an One fell short of Christian Obedience, and consequently fell short of being related to Christ and his People; because Christ will not own them to be his People. who obstinately and wilfully refuse to submit to his Law, tho' the Temptation be never so strong which is the Ground of that Disobedience. And this our Lord plainly declar'd to *Nicodemus*, the Person to whom the Words (referr'd to) were spoken; For when the Jews had agreed, that whosoever confess'd Christ, should be put out of the Synagogue; this so wrought upon *Nicodemus's* Fear, that he came to Jesus by Night. Now our Lord, that he might convince him and all other *Nicodemus's*, that such were not his People, who believed in him, but were ashamed or afraid to own him for their Lord; told him, *That except a Man was born of Water, he could not enter into the Kingdom of God:* Which is as much as if he had said; I find, *Nicodemus*, by thy Confession, that thou believest me to be that *Messiah*, which I pretend to be; and thy Practice in coming to me by Night, shews that thou art afraid to own me to be such, lest thou shouldst draw against thee the Malice of the Jews: But I do assure thee, that I will have no such Cowards in my Service; for whosoever believes in me, it is my Will and Command, that he publickly own his Separation from all other Religions and Societies, and acknowledge his Relation to me and my People, by being baptized; or else he cannot be my Disciple, nor a Subject of that Kingdom which my Father hath made me the Head of.

* Note. I say, such Persons are not Christians or Members of Christ's Body the Church; and consequently have no Claim to the Promises of the Gospel: But how far the Strength of the Temptation may be taken into their Account; and how far they may be the Objects of God's Mercy at the Day of Judgment, we know not.

Here we see, that tho' a Person's declining to own Christ, by declining Baptism, and so declining that Persecution, or other Inconveniencies, which would attend such a publick Acknowledgment, prove such a Person to be no Christian; yet his being baptiz'd does not make him so, any otherways than as it is an Instance of his Christian Obedience, and as it is a publick owning and professing himself to be so; just as swearing Allegiance to King *George* does not make a Man a Subject to King *George*, any otherways than as it is an Instance of his Subjection, and a publick Acknowledgment thereof. And therefore when our Lord commanded his Apostles to preach the Gospel to every Creature, he said; *He that believeth and is baptiz'd, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* He does not say, He that is not baptiz'd, shall be damn'd: Because to be baptiz'd, was but a single Act of Christian Obedience, which in some Cases Men might not be capable of exercising.

From the whole, I think it appears, that the Case of Baptism is no Objection against our Observation, (*viz.*) That our Relation to Christ and his Body the Church, is contracted by our Faith and Subjection to Christ, and not by any external Profession, Priviledge, or Performance.

Fourthly, I observe, That it is one thing to do the Work of an Apostle, and another thing to be an Apostle by Office; even as it is one thing to distribute an Alms, which is the Work of a Deacon, and another thing to be an Almoner or Deacon by Office. To preach Christ to Unbelievers, and to baptize those that are Profelited to Christ by that preaching, and to instruct in the Faith and Practice of the Gospel those that are thus Baptized, is the Work of an Apostle, *Matt.* 28. 19, 20. and this Work was done by *Philip* the Deacon, tho' he was not an Apostle by Office, *Act.* 8. 5, 12. To be an Apostle by Office, is to be Chosen and set a-part for the aforeaid Work.

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Here we see that the Work of an Apostle was not peculiar to the Office of an Apostle, but might be, and was performed by those who were not called and set a-part to that Office. For tho' our Lord call'd, and sent forth his Apostles, and made it their Duty and Business to proclaim the good Tidings of Peace and Salvation to Mankind, and to do all that was necessary to make Men the faithful Subjects of Christ's Kingdom; yet this did not at all hinder nor prevent others from doing all that properly and decently came within the compass of their Power towards the promoting the same Work. Every Christian that had a Tongue to speak, as he lawfully might, so he could not better employ that Tongue, than in preaching Christ to Unbelievers, when it did appear likely and probable that he should serve the Interest of Christianity by it.

Here it may not be amiss to observe, that tho' the Work of an Apostle was perform'd by those that were not Apostles by Office, such as *Philip* the Deacon before-mention'd, who was so far from being an Apostle by Office, that he was no more than a Minister in Carnal things, or, to use *St. Peter's* Expression, was chosen and set a-part to serve Tables; as was *Apollos* likewise, who knew only the Baptism of *John*, *Acts* 18. 25. Yet those that were Apostles by Office, were so far from being offended with them upon this Account, or esteeming them as Invaders of their Right, that on the contrary they esteem'd them as Partners, and Fellow-helpers in the Work of the Gospel, and look'd upon their Performances in this Work as a proper ground of Joy to them. Thus, *Phil.* i. 15,---18. *Some indeed preach Christ, even of Envy and Strife and some also of Good Will: The one preach Christ of Contention, not sincerely; supposing to add Affliction to my Bonds; but the other of Love knowing that I am set for the Defence of the Gospel. What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in Presence,*

tence, or in Truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoyce, yea, and will rejoyce. Here we see, tho' some Persons did the Work of Apostles in preaching Christ, from an envious wicked Principle, and to a wicked End, (*viz.*) that they might add to St. Paul's Bonds; yet notwithstanding, seeing the Work was done, that Christ was preached, that the Business of Man's Salvation was propagated and carried on, the Apostle look'd upon it as a proper ground for his Rejoycing. This is quite contrary to that temper of Spirit which appears in the Professors of Christianity at this day; for if a Man now does but the Work of a Pastor, (not to say, the Work of an Apostle,) who is not set a-part to the Office of a Pastor, he is stigmatiz'd with the Character of a Thief and a Robber, and is represented as a Sacrilegious Invader of other Men's Rights, even tho' the Circumstances of things invite or call him to do what he does; and tho' in that Performance he really promotes the Kingdom of Christ, and the Good of Souls; and tho' there is not any one Act that belongs to the Pastoral-Office, which is peculiar to that Office, but may be perform'd by others (to whom God has given Ability for such Performances,) when they are providentially call'd to it.

To conclude, The Sum of the foregoing Observations is this: That Christ, and he only, is the Head or Governour, properly so called, of the Christian Church; and all the Members of that Body stand upon a level in point of Authority, they being all Fellow-Servants to the same Master, and Fellow-Subjects to the same Prince. That tho' the Apostles were entrusted with that valuable Treasure the Doctrine of the Gospel, which they as good Stewards were faithfully to dispence both to *Jew* and *Gentile*; yet they had no Authority, properly so call'd, lodg'd in them over the Consciences of Men, either in point of Faith or Practice. That they never exercised such

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an Authority themselves, nor pretended to confer it upon others. That the Relation which Christians stand in to Christ, and to one another, is wholly founded in their Union by Faith and Obedience to Christ; and not in any external Profession, Privilege, or Performance. That tho' the Apostles were commission'd to preach Christ to Unbelievers, yet that Preaching was not confin'd to the Apostolick Office, but might be perform'd by others to whom God hath given Ability and Opportunity for such a Work. From all which I think we may justly infer, that the Unity of Christ's Church does not consist in the Members Union with, and subjection to the Unjust Authority of their Fellow-Members; but only in their Union by Faith and Subjection to Christ their lawful and proper Governour, and to one another in the Holy Bonds of Love and Christian Communion; and consequently the Objection referr'd to is utterly false and groundless.

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AN ENQUIRY CONCERNING PRAYER.

This Enquiry is four-fold; First, What Prayer is; Secondly, Who is the proper Object of Prayer; Thirdly, What are the Ends of Prayer; And Fourthly, What Prayer will be accepted and answer'd.

FIRST, What Prayer is.
Prayer (when directed to God) may be consider'd in a larger, or in a more restrained Sense. When consider'd in a larger Sense, it signifies the Address or Application of a Dependent Being, to his Supreme Governour and Original Benefactor; and so it comprehends or contains all those particular Acts, which, when distinguished one from another, we call Confession, Petition, Thanksgiving, and the like. But when it is consider'd in a more restrained Sense, then we confine it to Petition only. And in this Sense, it may respect the Petitioner, or others. If it respects the Petitioner, then it is a Petitioning to be

be deliver'd from some Evil that we feel, or to escape some Evil that we fear; or a petitioning for a supply of those Good things we want, or for the continuance of those we already enjoy. If it respects Others, this may be consider'd in two respects; (*viz.*) Imprecation, and Intercession. By Imprecation, we mean petitioning for some Evil to be inflicted upon them, or continued to them: And by Intercession, we mean a petitioning for some Good to be conferr'd upon them, or continued to them; or for the removing, or preventing of some Evil, which they are under, or in danger of falling into.

In the present Enquiry, I shall consider Prayer in a restrained Sense, as it is confined to Petition; and likewise as it respects the Petitioner only. And accordingly, I say, that Prayer is the Act of the Mind, carried out in Desire after some Good not enjoy'd.

I say; Prayer is the Act of the *Mind*. In which I exclude the Act of the Tongue as essential to Prayer. And the Reason of this, is evident; because we can put up our Desires to God without the Use of vocal Words to express those Desires by; And consequently the Use of the Tongue is not essential to Prayer. Indeed when our Desires are to be express'd in order for Others to join their Desires with them, (as in Publick Prayer,) then the Use of the Tongue is necessary to that End: But this does not make it necessary and essential to Prayer, consider'd simply in it self.

Again I say, Prayer is the Act of the Mind, carried out in Desire after some *Good*. By which I mean, that the thing prayed for, is always Good in it self, (at least it is so in the Judgment of the Petitioner;) or else it is Good consider'd as a Means, either to continue some present, or procure some future Good; or to remove some present, or avert some future Evil. I say, The thing prayed for, is always Good under one or other of these Considerations; because

because it is impossible for a Man to desire for himself Evil, as such; and therefore when Men desire Death, which is an Evil of all Evils that Mankind generally flee from, they do not desire it as Evil, but as Good, that is, as a Means either to obtain some Good which they expect beyond it, or else to remove them from some great Evil which they esteem worse than Death.

Again, I say, That Prayer is the Act of the Mind, carried out in Desire after some Good [*not enjoy'd.*] As the thing prayed for, is always good under one or other of the foremention'd Considerations, so it is always future or at a Distance. And the Reason of this, is manifest; because Desire always supposes the Absence of the thing desired; and therefore it must be either future and at a distance, or else it cannot be desired by us. Indeed we may desire, and consequently pray for the Continuance of what we already enjoy: But this is not praying for what we have, but for what we have not, (*viz.*) for the Continuance of what we have, which Continuance as yet we have not.

Again, I say, Prayer is the Act of the Mind [*carried out.*] By which I mean, that it is carried out in Desire or Petition to God, that he will vouchsafe to give us the thing which we desire to have. For as Prayer is an Act of Desire, so we must not only desire to have what we want, but also we must desire or petition God to give us that thing, or else it is not Prayer. Desire, in this Case, has a two-fold Act; first, we desire the having or enjoying of a thing; and secondly, we desire or petition God to give us that Enjoyment. Now it is the latter of these only, which is Prayer. If a Man is Sick of some Disease, and he desires to have Health; in this Case, the bare desiring to have Health, is not Prayer; but when to our Desire of having a thing, we add a Desire, and direct that Desire, as a Petition

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or Address to God, that he will vouchsafe to give us Health, or the thing desired: This is Prayer.

Lastly, I say, Prayer is the Act of the Mind carried out in [*Desire.*] In which I exclude all other Acts of the Mind, from being Prayer: And therefore I say, that Love, Hatred, Hope, Fear, Joy, Sorrow, Anger, and the like, tho' these are Acts of the Mind, yet they are not Prayer; and tho' these may be exercised in, or be the Occasion of or be the Attendants of Prayer, yet they are not Prayer it self. And as to those other Acts of the Mind, which are so united to Desire, that it cannot be brought forth into act without them, such as Thought and Reflection, yet even these are not Prayer; for tho' we cannot desire any thing without thinking upon what we desire; and tho' we think and reflect upon a thing never so much, yet if that Thought and Reflection does not produce an actual Desire, and the putting forth of that Desire by Petition to God, this is not Prayer. So that whatever goes beyond, or falls short of the going out of Desire to God, is not Prayer. Desire, may be weaker or stronger; and the putting forth of that Desire in Petition to God, may be more or less earnest, (or fervent, or whatever term we express it by;) and every Degree of Desire, whether greater or less, put forth as aforesaid, is Prayer; because it is that wherein the very Essence of Prayer consists, (*viz.*) the Act of the Mind going forth in desire to God: But whatever is less or more than this, is not Prayer. Thus when a Man would pray to God, it is not enough for him to use praying Words, that is, words which are expressive of Desire; neither is it enough for him to employ his Mind in thinking upon, and producing of Words which are suitable and proper for the expressing of such Desire; (for whether we instantly think upon Words, or whether we use Words already prepared to our hands, either by our
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selves or others, it makes no alteration in the Case, any otherways than as either of them is a Help or a Hindrance to Prayer, as perhaps either of them may be a Help to some Men in some Cases, and a Hindrance to others;) neither is it enough for him to mind what the Sense and Meaning of those Words are, which he uses, because all this may be done, and yet he may not pray. His thinking upon any Subject, and speaking in such Words as are expressive of Desire, and his having a Sense of what he means by those Words, is not Prayer; except his Thoughts so affect him, as to draw forth his Desire in Petition to God, for the obtaining of those things which he thinks and reflects upon. So, on the other side, whatever is more than this, is not Prayer. If, when a Man so thinks and considers of any Subject as that it draws forth his Desire in Prayer to God; any other Act of the Mind accompanies or follows, it, whether it be Love or Hatred, Hope or Fear, Anger, or the like; none of such Acts are Prayer. Thus if a Man should so think of his Sins, as to be induced thereby to desire God to forgive him; and if this should so affect him, as to cause him to be sorry for his Faults, and angry with himself that he has done so foolishly: In this Case, his Sorrow for his Sin, and his Anger against himself, is not Prayer, tho' they are very suitable Companions to it. The Case is the same with every other Act of the Mind, which may be exercised in Prayer, or may follow upon it.

And as those other Acts of the Mind are in their proper places suitable Companions to Prayer; so when they are exercised in a proper and due Measure, they are Helps to it. Thus when a Man so reflects upon his Sins, as to be deeply humbled with Sorrow and Shame, and Indignation against himself; this has a natural tendency to create in him a strong Desire that they may be forgiven him, and to put up
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that Desire very earnestly to God for the obtaining that Pardon. But when those other Acts of the Mind are exercised in an undue Measure, and exceed the Bounds of Reason; then they are so far from being Helps, that on the contrary they are Hindrances to Prayer. Thus if a Man should be so transported with Grief and Anger, when he reflects upon his Sin, as that he should wring his Hands, and tear his Hair, and rent his Cloaths, and cast Dust upon his Head, and roll upon the Ground, and the like; as such a Transport of Sorrow and Anger would make him more like a Brute than a Man, so it would be a Hindrance and not a Help to Prayer. For when Men's Minds are thus ruffled, and discompos'd, they are indispos'd thereby for the regular and proper Exercise of any Duty whatsoever. When the Mind of Man is in a regular and undisturbed State, that is, when it is govern'd by Reason, then it is capable of putting forth any Act with Strength and Vigour; then a Man is capable of praying with Fervency, (*viz.*) with a strong and earnest Desire to obtain what he prays for: But when a Man's Mind is thrown into Disorder, and is discompos'd by any ungovern'd Act, then he is weakned and indispos'd for the strong and vigorous Exercise of this or any other Duty.

If it should be here objected; That we have the Declarations and Examples of Holy Men in Scripture, who have been transported as aforesaid.

I answer; Many Declarations which we have in Scripture, are deliver'd in figurative and borrow'd Expressions; and many others are a loftiness of Speech, which express much more than the Speaker intends. And as to the Practices of Good Men of old, they were rather a Conformity to the Customs and Usages of the Times and Places in which they liv'd, than the Effect of a Mind transported beyond due Measure, that is, beyond the Bounds of Reason. *David* danced before the Ark in praising God: But I think,

with Submission, this Dancing was not the Effect of a Mind discomposed by a Transport of Joy, but was a Conformity to the Usage and Customs of those Times, who did express their Joy by dancing. But as Customs and Usages change, so now if a good Man should, in praising God, dance as *David* did, he would make himself ridiculous. Besides, the good Men of old were like the good Men now; that is, they were of like Passions with other Men: and therefore it is not their Examples, but the Nature and Reason of the Thing, which ought to determine in this Case.

If it should be farther objected, That our Saviour, when he was in an Agony, pray'd yet more earnestly.

I answer: The true state of that Case I take to be this: Our Saviour's serious Reflections upon that Scene of Miseries and Temptations which he was just then entering upon, put him into great Fear, whether he should be able to stand the Tryal. This Fear had a twofold Effect upon him; first upon his Body, in that it caused him to sweat to that degree, that it fell from him in great Drops, like as Blood useth to drop from a Wound; (for tho' his Sweat is usually called, *His Bloody Sweat*, yet this is without Warrant from the Text: The Text saith, *that he sweat [as it were] great Drops of Blood, falling down to the Ground.*) Secondly, it had an Effect upon his Mind; he prayed to his Father more earnestly, (with Submission to his Will,) that he might escape that which was the Ground of his Fear: *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me.* And as he thus prayed with strong Crying and Tears, to him that was able to save him from Death; So *St. Paul* saith, *Heb. 5, 7, That he was heard in that he feared;* that is, his Father gave him Strength sufficient for his Tryal; for he had an Angel sent from Heaven to strengthen and comfort Him. Now as this great
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Fear which our Saviour was under, made Him to sweat to a very great Degree; and as this Fear, and the Effect of it, is called by the Evangelist, *an Agony*; and as it caused him to make more earnest Supplications and Prayers, with strong Crying and Tears to his Father, for an Escape from that which was the Ground of it: So he still preserv'd in himself a regular and compos'd Mind; a Mind which was not distracted, nor over born by all that Burden which lay upon it; a Mind which prayed yet more earnestly; Which shews plainly that it was under the Government of Reason, and not in Agitation or Discomposure. As our Saviour was under great Fear; So that Fear, or rather his serious Reflections upon that which was the Ground of it, drew from him strong Desires; and these Desires he put up to his Father with great Earnestness; but still maintain'd in himself a Mind regular and undisturbed, when those Terms are oppos'd to a Mind ruffled and discompos'd by an ungovern'd Transport, whether of Fear, Joy, Sorrow, or the like.

And as Desire is stronger or weaker, and as the putting forth of that Desire is more or less earnest; so this Difference arises, partly from the different Temper and Constitution of the Petitioner, partly from the different Subjects it is exercis'd upon, partly from the different Manners of our thinking and reflecting upon those Subjects, and partly from some other Causes. I say, Partly from the different Manners of our thinking and reflecting upon those Subjects: For as the same Words have a different Effect upon the Minds of Men, from the different Manners of their being express'd; so our own Reflections have a different Influence upon our own Minds, from the different Manner of reflecting. Thus if a Man should walk along the Streets of a City, in a very slow Pace, with his Face to the Ground; and should with a slow and weak Voice say, *Fire, Fire*; and

and should shew an Unconcernedness at what he said; This would make very little or no Impression upon the Minds of those that heard him : The Manner of this Address would indispose People from being affected with it : Whereas if the same Man should hastily walk along the Streets of the same City, and should in a grave and serious Manner, with an audible Voice cry *Fire*, as aforesaid ; this would strongly affect all that heard him ; because both the Subject, and the Manner of Address, have a natural Tendency to produce this Effect. So in like Manner when we think and reflect upon any Subject, in a slight, careless and indifferent Manner ; such Thoughts and Reflections will have little or no Effect upon our Minds or Lives : But when we think seriously, and with Concern, upon the same Subject, and with an earnest Application of Thought and Reflection ; this strongly affects us, and has a Tendency to make a great and lasting Impression upon us. Further,

As Prayer consists in the going out of Desire to God, and as this Desire may be strong, or weak, and the putting forth of this Desire may be more or less earnest ; so it certainly becomes us to reflect upon the Subject of Desire, with such Seriousness and Concern as is suitable to it, and may be productive of earnest Supplication and Prayer ; seeing it is such as is most acceptable to God, and most effectual to answer the Ends of Prayer. Our Lord reflected so seriously upon the Sufferings he was to undergo, that it produced Supplications and Prayers with strong Crying and Tears. Not but that we ought still to keep our Reflections within the Bounds of Reason ; because when we go beyond this, they distract and so weaken the Mind, like as when a Man runs along the Streets of a City, and with loud and hideous Noise cries, *Fire, Fire*, this surprizes and affrights, and so weakens the Minds of those that hear it. The Manner of our reflecting, is for the raising or heightning of our Affections,

Affections, like Wind to a Ship. If we think slightly and without Concern upon any Subject, our Affections are in such a Case like a Ship becalm'd, unmov'd, or at least mov'd very weakly. If we think seriously, our Affections are moved proportionably, either with Fear, Love, Desire, or the like; even as a Ship is moved faster or slower, in Proportion to the Gale of Wind it is under the Influence of. But if our Reflections are so violent and disorderly, as not to be under the Government of Reason, then they distract and confound the Mind, like a Ship under the Violence of a Storm; and so render it indisposed for the regular and due Exercise of any Affection or Duty whatsoever.

Thus I have enquired into the first Particular, what Prayer is; namely, The Act of the Mind carried out in Desire after some Good not enjoyed.

Secondly, *Who* is the proper Object of Prayer.

Note; in this Branch of the Enquiry, I shall likewise consider Prayer in a restrained Sense, as it is confined to Petition only. So that by the proper Object of Prayer, I mean, *who* we may apply our selves to for a Supply of our Wants, with a reasonable hope of Success.

Here I shall consider the Object of Prayer in the largest Sense; and accordingly, I say, That every Being is the proper Object of Prayer, which hears our Petitions, and is possess'd with Ability to help us; or that can intercede with, and make an Interest for us to him that is possess'd with such Ability, and that hath a Right to exercise that Ability for our Good, and also hath a Will or Disposition to help us, or may be wrought upon by our Prayers to have such a Disposition.

I say, the proper Object of Prayer, must be one that hears our Prayers. And this is most evident: For as the End of Prayer, in this Case, is the obtaining the good Things we pray for; and tho' He whom we

we pray to hath Ability to help us, yet our Prayers cannot be a proper Means to answer that End, except the Being we pray to hears those Prayers, and so is induced by them to answer them; consequently when we pray to any Being which does not hear our Petitions, we can have no reasonable ground to hope for Success.

Again, I say, that the proper Object of Prayer must be one that is possess'd with Ability to help us, or that can intercede with, and make an Interest for us to him that is possess'd of such Ability. And the Reason of this is clear; because we can have no rational Ground to hope that the End of our Prayers will be answer'd, (in obtaining the good Things prayed for,) except the Being we pray to is either invested with Ability to help us himself, or else can intercede with, and make an Interest for us to him that is invested with such Ability; there being no just Ground to hope for Success if we seek for Help where it is not to be had.

I say farther, That the proper Object of Prayer must not only be possess'd of Ability to help us, but also he must be invested with a Right to exercise that Ability for our good. Thus, for Example if an Almoner is entrusted with an hundred Pounds to give to twenty poor Men; and if he hath an express Order to give it to some particular Men, and to no others; and if another poor Man that is upon the Nomination, should petition him for some of this Money; in this Case the poor Man would pray to one that is not the proper Object of his Prayer: For tho' the Almoner is possess'd with Ability to help him, yet the poor Man can have no reasonable Ground to hope for Success; because this *Almoner* is not to govern himself (in the Distribution of this Bounty) by the Cries nor Necessities of the Poor, but by the Rule and Direction given him by his Lord.

Lastly, I say, that the proper Object of Prayer must

must be one that hath a Will or Disposition to help us, or may be wrought upon by our Prayers to have such a Disposition. And the Reason of this, is evident; because the Want of a Will or Disposition to help us is as great a Bar to our Attainment, as the Want of Power and Ability: And consequently when we know such a Disposition cannot be obtain'd, there can be no rational Ground to hope for Success.

These Grounds being laid down, which are undeniably evident in themselves; from hence I raise the following Observations.

First, that Stocks and Stones, and the like, are in no Case the proper Objects of Prayer; because they are defective and wanting in every Thing which is absolutely necessary to make them so. I observe

Secondly, that our Fellow-Creatures, Mankind, when in proper Circumstances, are the proper Objects of Prayer: That is, when we can acquaint them with our Desires, and when they are possess'd with Ability to help us, and have a Right to exercise that Ability for our good, or can use their Interest with others that are possess'd with such Ability; and when we have Reason to think, either that they have a Disposition to help us, or may be prevail'd upon by our Prayers to have such a Disposition: I say, that Men in these Circumstances are the proper Objects of Prayer, because there is good Ground to hope, that if we are the proper Objects of their Kindness, our Prayers will be accepted, and answer'd. I observe

Thirdly, that the Souls of Men departed this Life, in all Probability are not the proper Objects of Prayer. For as we have no just Ground to think, either that they hear our Prayers, or that they have any Power or Ability, to help us; so from hence it will follow, that in all Probability they are not proper Objects to be pray'd to; because if we should address

dress to them, we have no reasonable Ground to hope for Success. I observe

Fourthly, That 'tis probable good Angels are not the proper Objects of Prayer; at least we have no Assurance that they are. For tho' they are all ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be Heirs of Salvation, and so are entrusted with Ability to help those they are to minister to; yet notwithstanding this, they may not be proper Objects to be pray'd to; *First*, because we do not know, nor can we have any Assurance that they hear any of our Prayers; and consequently can have no just Ground to hope for Success, if we pray to them. *Secondly*, suppose they do hear our Prayers, yet, for ought we know, they may not be at Liberty to exercise their Ability as they please: but, like the Almoner before-mention'd, they may have a particular Direction how to employ it: and consequently they may not be proper to be petition'd to for their Help; because, in such a Case, they are not to govern themselves in their Ministration by our Prayers, but by the Rule and Directions given them by their Lord. I observe

Fifthly, it is a Question whether the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, be the proper Object of Prayer for all Things. For tho' we may pray to him for his Intercession, that is, that he would pray to and use his Interest with the Father for the obtaining to us those good Things which we want, yet notwithstanding this he may not be the proper Object of Prayer for *All* Things. For tho' he is constituted by his Father to be the Lord, and Head of his People, to be the Governor and Judge of the World; and so may well be supposed to have the full Knowledge of us in all Circumstances, and a full Power to discharge the Trust reposed in him; and consequently may both hear our Prayers, and have Ability and a Disposition to help us; yet notwithstanding this, there may

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may be some Things which the Father may not have revealed to, nor put into the Hand of our Saviour, but may reserve it to his own Will and Pleasure. And that this was so in Fact, both before and after our Lord's Resurrection, is evident from his own Words, if his Testimony may be believed in the Case. Thus *Mar. 13, 32, Of that Day and Hour knoweth no one, no not the Angels which are in Heaven, nor the Son, but the Father. Act. 1, 7, It is not for you to know the Times and the Seasons which the Father hath put in his [own] Power.* And tho' the Father hath constituted his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to be the chief Minister of his great Grace to Mankind; yet notwithstanding this he may reserve to himself, and to his own Will, the disposing or rather the directing the Distribution of his Blessings, and so may reserve to himself the Prerogative of being the proper Object of Prayer in this Case. And tho' Christ may be employ'd in distributing to his People all those Things which they shall ask of the Father in his Name; yet possibly he may not distribute them as his own Bounty, and merely according to his own Will; but as the Bounty, and according to the Will of his heavenly Father. And that this is the Case, seems evident from his own Words: *Luk. 11. 13, How much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him. Chap. 12. 13, It is your Fathers good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Job. 16. 23, Verily, Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my Name, he will give it you. Matt. 25. 34, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, &c.* Here we see, that they were blessed of the Father, in that he had provided an Inheritance or Kingdom for them; and that all these Blessings were originally given them by the Father; and were bestowed upon them according to his good Pleasure; tho' the Son was the Minister of these Blessings to them, But this will appear most evident, from our

Lord's Answer to *James and John*, *Matt. 20, 23*.
Ye shall indeed drink of my Cup, and be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit at my Right-hand, and at my Left, [is not mine to give,] but for whom it is prepared of my Father. Here we see, that tho' Christ will be the actual Dispenser of the Benefits which the Mother of *James and John* pray'd to him for, and so will actually place those whom his Father shall appoint, at his Right-Hand and at his Left in his Kingdom; yet he solemnly declared it was not his to give; and consequently it was not he, but his Father only, which ought properly to be pray'd to for them. Besides, there are three Things observable, which are of great Importance to the present Question. *First*, our Lord seems very much to discourage his People from putting up their Addresses to him; *Joh. 16, 23*, *In that Day ye shall ask me nothing.* Now if our Lord hath so far the disposing of Benefits in his Hand, as that he is the proper Object to be sought to for them; then it is very unlikely that he would have discouraged us from putting up our Petitions to him for them. And if this was the proper Way of doing him Honour, he would never have discouraged the Practice of it; because he has represented it as a Crime in us to withhold from him any Honour which is his Due; *Joh. 5. 23*, *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.* *Secondly*, our Lord hath directed his People to put up all their Addresses to the Father; And he has likewise directed them what Arguments to use with his Father, for the obtaining of the Benefits prayed for; (*viz.*) That they shall desire God to give them upon his Account, and for his Sake. Now it is difficult to suppose, that our Lord would direct his People to put up their Addresses to the Father, and direct them to make Use of his Name with the Father in order to obtain their Petitions, if he himself had those very Blessings absolutely in his

his own Hand, and at his own Pleasure to bestow antecedent to those Prayers. *Thirdly*, the sacred Records of the Christian Religion declare that Christ is ascended into Heaven, there to appear in the Presence of God for us; and that he continually makes Intercession for us, and the like. Now it is unreasonable to suppose, that our Lord should intercede with, and make an Interest to his Father for the obtaining of those very Blessings to his People, which are already absolutely in his own Hand, and at his own Disposal antecedent to that Intercession. And consequently it is justly a Question, whether our Lord, is the proper Object of Prayer for *All* Things.

If it should be here objected, *First*, That though God is the original Fountain and Giver of all good Things, and so is most proper to be sought to for them; yet notwithstanding, as we may petition even our Fellow-Creatures Mankind for those very Benefits, which they are but Instruments in God's Hand in bestowing upon us; so consequently *much more* may we petition our Saviour for those Benefits, which he is only an Instrument in his Father's Hand in the Distribution of.

I answer, When we petition God for those Things, which we likewise petition our Fellow-Creatures Mankind for; the Sense of such Petitions are, (or at least ought to be,) that we desire God so to dispose of Things in the Course of his Providence, as that by our honest Endeavours we may obtain the good Things we want and pray for. Now our Petitioning our Fellow-Creatures for the same Things, is a part of that Endeavour; for as we are not to expect that God should work a Miracle for our Help, if that Help can be obtained in an ordinary Way; so it is our Duty to use our Endeavour for its Attainment; which Endeavour sometimes consists in acquainting our Fellow-Creatures with our Wants. and

stirring up in them, by our Prayers, a Disposition to help us; which Knowledge and Disposition otherways they may be destitute of, and consequently may not know that we are the Objects of their Pity, or that it is God's Will that they should relieve us. But with Respect to our Saviour, the Case may reasonably be supposed to be quite otherways: Because we have Reason to suppose that He wants neither Knowledge nor Disposition to communicate whatsoever his Father shall put into his Hand to bestow upon us. Besides; tho' Mankind has no such Thing as Property, with Respect to God; yet they have such a Thing, with Respect to one another; And consequently, tho' with Respect to God, whatever they do is all Duty; yet with Respect to Men, whatever they properly give is all Bounty: And therefore for these Things, they are the proper Objects of our Prayers; because, with Respect to us, they give what is their own. But as to our Saviour, he chuses to disown any Property in the Benefits which his Father hath put into his Hand to distribute: *Matt. 20, 23, To sit at my Right-hand and at my Left, [is not mine to give,] but for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

If it should be objected, *secondly*; That as we acknowledge our Dependance upon God by praying to him; so we may also acknowledge the divine Power of our Lord, and that he is the Head over all Things for the good of his Church, by Prayers and Thanksgivings, sho' he will distribute his Favours according to the Appointment, and to the Honour of his Father.

I answer, As the Laws of common Equity, as well as the Christian Revelation, oblige us to render to all their Due; *Honour to whom Honour; Fear to whom Fear; Tribute, to whom Tribute is due*: So it is our Duty to render to the Father, the Honour which is due to his Name; and to the Son, the Honour which is due to him, by acknowledging what he hath done and

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suffer'd for us, and procured to us; to acknowledge, to his Praise, that great Instance of his Love, in laying down his precious Life in our Cause, and for our Sakes; and for that he hath redeemed us to God by his Blood, out of every Nation, and Kindred, and Tongue, and People. But tho' we ought to make use of all proper Ways and Means, to honour and worship our blessed Redeemer; yet we should avoid using such as may be improper Ways of doing it, such as are contrary to his Directions, and which may eclipse the Glory of his Father. And consequently we should not choose to put up our Petitions to him for those things, which he hath directed us to pray for to the Father in his Name; because as this is acting contrary to his Direction, so it is a petitioning him for that which in the most proper Sense is not his to give, and is a putting him in his Fathers stead. Our Lord told his Disciples, That they were his Friends, if they did whatsoever he commanded them; and consequently they do Christ the truest and the most acceptable Honour, who honour him in the way which he hath directed them.

If it should be objected, *Thirdly*, That St Stephen prayed to Christ; *Act. 7, 59, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit.*

I answer: My Notion is not, that Christ is in no respect the proper Object of Prayer. For I suppose that it may be proper to pray to him for his Intercession, (as I have already observ'd.) But As to St Stephen, the Case I take to be this. He had been conferring with the unbelieving *Jews*, concerning the Person and Ministry of our blessed Lord; and when these Unbelievers were not able to gainsay, nor resist the Wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake; this so stirred up their Malice and Indignation against him, that they gnashed upon him with their Teeth. But it pleased God at that Instant to give him a glorious View of the exalted State of our
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bleſſed Redeemer at God's Right hand; for the Heavens opened, and he ſaw the Glory of God, and Jeſus ſtanding at the Right hand of God. And this he declared to the People: Which ſo much the more increas'd their Anger againſt him; for they ſtopped their Ears, and ran upon him, and caſt him out of the City, and ſtoned him. Now while they were embrewing their hands in his precious Blood, and while he was beholding the Glory of God, and Jeſus ſtanding at God's Right hand, and being juſt entring into a State of Separation of Soul and Body, he, in theſe Circumſtances, firſt addreſſes himſelf to our Saviour Chriſt, by a modeſt reſignation of his Soul into his Hand, ſaying, *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit*: which is as much as if he had ſaid, Lord, into thy hands I reſign up my Spirit, and do thou receive or embrace it in the Arms of thy Love. And when he had thus addreſs'd our Saviour, he then addreſſes himſelf to God, in the behalf of his Murderers. Which Addreſs, as it was diſtinct from the former; ſo there is a Circumſtance peculiar to it, which the Hiſtorian particularly takes notice of, (*viz.*) *He kneeled down*; which was a praying Poſture: *He kneeled down, and cried with a loud Voice, Lord, lay not this Sin to their charge; and when he had ſaid this, he fell aſleep*. Now tho' St. Stephen did addreſs our Saviour, as aforeſaid; yet his Example does not warrant us in general to petition Chriſt for thoſe things, which he hath directed us to aſk of the Father in his Name.

If it ſhould be here replied. That St. Stephen addreſſed himſelf to Chriſt as well in the laſt Caſe as in the firſt. I anſwer: As St. Stephen follow'd the Example of Chriſt with reſpect to the Matter of this Prayer, he praying for his Murderers as Chriſt did; ſo it is highly reaſonable to ſuppoſe that he followed the Example and Direction of Chriſt with reſpect to the Object of his Prayer alſo. Our Lord every
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where in his Gospel, represents his Father as the proper Object of Prayer, with the respect to the Forgiveness of Sins; and he pray'd to his Father for that Forgiveness for his Crucifiers: Which supposes that this Forgiveness was not absolutely in his own hand, and at his own pleasure to bestow. This makes it very reasonable to suppose, that St. Stephen also directed his Request to God the Father in this Case. And hence it will follow in general, that the Father is the proper Object of Prayer for that Forgiveness, whether St. Stephen in his particular Circumstances prayed to Christ for it or no. I observe

Sixtly, That the most proper, prime, and unexceptionable Object of Prayer for *all things*, is the Supreme God, even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; He being one in whom all the Qualifications of a proper Object take place in the highest Degree. For as he is the original Fountain of our Being, and of all the Blessings and Mercies we either do or can enjoy; and as he perfectly hears all our Prayers, and knows all our Wants and Desires; so he hath in himself an underived Ability, and an almighty never-failing Power to help us; and hath an absolute underived Right, with the strongest Disposition to exercise that Ability for our Good, if we are the proper Objects of his Kindness. And all that Knowledge, that Ability, that Right, that Disposition, which is in any other Being, is originally derived from him. And consequently he is the most proper, chief, unexceptionable Object of Prayer for *all things*: And when we put up our Prayers to him, duly qualified, we have the most rational ground to hope for success. I observe

Lastly, That when we extend our Petitions farther than to our fellow-Creatures Mankind, for a supply of our Wants; it is our wisest and safest way to address our selves to the Supreme God the Father himself;

self; in hope of acceptance, upon the Account, and for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord, whom he hath constituted to be our Mediator and Intercessor: I say, It is our wisest and safest way to do thus,

First, Because the Supreme God, the Father, is the most proper, chief, and unexceptionable Object of Prayer, as I have already observed.

Secondly, Because the Christian Rule, taken both from the Pattern and the Precepts of Christ, directs us to put up all our Petitions to the Father. As to Christ's Pattern, See *Matt. 26, 39, He prayed, saying, O my Father, &c. Ver. 53, Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, &c. Luk. 23, 34, Father, forgive them, &c. Joh. 12. 27, 28, Father, save me from this hour, — Father, glorify thy Name, &c. Chap. 14, 16, I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter. Chap. 17, 1, Jesus lift up his Eyes to Heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son; and so on to the end of the Chapter. Here we see, that the Christian Rule, taken from Christ's Pattern, is to seek to the Father, and him only, as the great and original Supplier of all our Wants. As to Christ's Precepts, See *Matt. 6, 6, But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly. Ver. 9, After this manner pray ye, Our Father which art in Heaven, &c. Luk. 11, 2, When ye pray, say, Our Father, &c.* Here we see, that the Christian Rule, taken from Christ's Precepts, is to pray to the Father, and him only, as our original Benefactor. Seeing then that Christians have a plain Rule laid down for them to direct their Practice by, (with respect to the Object of Prayer;) I think, with submission, that it is the wisest and safest way for us always to act agreeable to this Rule. To obey is better than Sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of Rams, 1 Sam. 15. 22. When Nadab and Abihu departed*

parted from the Rule of their Duty, and offered strange Fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded; Fire came out from the Lord and devoured them, Lev. 10. 1, 2. I do not say this Case is at all parallel: But this I say, That God's Displeasure towards them stands recorded as a Warning to all succeeding Ages, for Men not to chuse to themselves Ways of serving God, with a neglect of the Way which he hath pointed out to them.

Thirdly, Because the Promise of being heard and answer'd, is made to those Prayers which are directed to the Father in Christ's Name. Thus, *Job. 16, 23, Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you. And ver. 26. Christ commands, saying, In that day ye shall ask in my Name. Seeing then that the Promise is made to such Prayers as are directed to the Father in Christ's Name, it will follow that it is our wisest and safest way to pray so as that our Petitions may come within the Limits of this Promise.*

Lastly, Because Christ every where represents his Father as the Fountain and Giver of all good things, such as the Pardon of Sin, the Benefits and Comforts of the Holy Spirit, the Rewards of eternal Life, and even the smallest things that relate to this Life; and that the disposing of these, depend upon the Father's good Pleasure. And all Christ's Reasoning in this Case, supposes the Father to be the Object of Prayer, and that He only should be sought to for these Blessings. *Matt. 6, 8, Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. Ver. 14, 15, If ye forgive Men their Trespases, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive your Trespases. Ver. 26. Behold the Fowls of the Air, your heavenly Father feedeth them. Ver. 32, Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. Chap. 10, 29, Are not two Sparrows sold for a Farthing? and one of*

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them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. Chap. 11. 25, 26, *At that time Jesus answer'd and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth; because thou hast hid these things from the Wise and Prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes: even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* Chap. 18, 19, *If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing which they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.* Ver. 35, *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto every one of you, if ye forgive not every one his brother their Trespases.* Mar. 11; 25, 26, *What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any, that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your Trespases: But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your Trespases.* Luk. 11, 13, *How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.* Chap. 12, 32, *Fear not, little Flock; it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* Joh. 6, 32, *My Father giveth you the true Bread from heaven.* Ver. 65, *No Man can come unto me, except it were given him of my Father.* Chap 14, 16, *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, &c.* Chap. 16, 23, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you.* Here we see, that Christ represents his Father as the Fountain and Giver of all good things; and that the disposing of these, depends upon his good pleasure; and that the Father 'is he which should be sought to for them; and consequently that it is our wisest and safest way to put up all our Petitions to the Supreme God the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he hath exalted at his Right hand to be our prevailing Intercessor.

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a supply of our Wants, with a reasonable Hope of success.

Thirdly, What are the Ends of Prayer.

The Ends of Prayer, (when directed to God,) may be consider'd in two respects; First, God's End in appointing; and Secondly, Man's End in exercising this Duty.

First, Of God's End in appointing the Duty of Prayer: Which I take to be wholly and solely the Good and Benefit of the Petitioner. For as God is absolutely and independently perfect in himself; and as he is completely happy in the Enjoyment of himself; so he can have no self-Interest, no Motive nor Inducement upon his own Account to move him to require or appoint any Duty or Performance whatsoever: And consequently God's End in requiring this Duty, is wholly and solely the Good and Benefit of his Creatures, (*viz.*) that it may be a Means to work in the Petitioner a suitable frame and temper of Mind, and to dispose him to a suitable Practice and Conversation, and so render him a suitable and proper Object of God's special Care and Love. For as Prayer is an Address or Application of a Dependent Being to his Supreme Governour, and Original Benefactor; so when this Duty is perform'd with seriousness and application of Mind, it naturally tends to work in Men an awful Sense of the Being and Attributes of God, of our Dependance upon him, and of the many Obligations we are under to serve him. It tends to awaken in us a lively Sense of the Sovereignty and Power; of the Knowledge and Wisdom; of the Holiness, Truth, and Righteousness; of the Mercy, Goodness and Loving-kindness of the Lord. It naturally draws forth our Souls in filial Fear; in Hope and Trust; in Love, Delight, and Joy in God; and creates in us a just concern to please him, and to approve ourselves in his sight; and consequently to put on that

Purity and Piety, Humility and Charity, which is the Spirit and Practice of true Christianity. And as this is God's End in the appointing of this Duty; so for this End he requires the frequent Returns of it, that the Mind of the Petitioner may be habitually season'd with a Sense of himself. It is when we forget God, when God is not in all our Thoughts, that we do amiss: Then our Minds and Lives are corrupted and defiled. But when we keep alive in our selves (which is done by frequent serious Prayer,) an awful and an affecting Sense of the Great and Supreme Mind; when with *David* we set God always before us; when he is at our Right-hand: Then it is that we shall not be moved, *Psal.* 16, 8. This I take to be God's End in appointing the Duty of Prayer, and the frequent Returns of it, (*viz.*) that it may create and keep alive in Mens Minds such an awful and affecting Sense of himself, as may produce in them suitable Affections, a suitable Frame and Temper of Mind, and draw forth from them a suitable Practice and Conversation.

Secondly, Of Man's Ends in the practising of this Duty: And these may likewise be consider'd in two Respects; First, What Ends they do propose; And Secondly, What Ends they may or ought to propose in the Exercise of this Duty. I shall only consider this Matter as it respects the latter, *viz.* What Ends Men may or ought to propose to themselves in this performance: And these are several; as

First, That they may shew their Respect, and do homage to their Supreme Governour and original Benefactor. And this End is best served in publick Prayer.

Secondly, That they may pay Obedience to God's Command. For as God hath required the Practice of this Duty, so certainly we may and ought to perform it with this View, and to this End, that God's Law

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Law may be observed by us, and to shew our ready Compliance with it.

Thirdly, That we may approve our selves to God in that Performance. For as God approves of, and is well pleased with, the Service and Obedience of his Creatures; so his Creatures may very justly propose this as the End of their Services, that they may recommend themselves to God's Favour by it.

Fourthly, That they may obtain the Things prayed for. This is supposed in the very Performance: For, to address God for the obtaining of a Thing, and yet not to propose the obtaining of that Thing as the End of that Address, is absurd.

Fifthly, Men may and ought to make that the End of this Performance, which was God's End in the appointing of it. (*viz*) that they may be made better by it, that they may become the proper Objects of God's Kindness. For as this was God's sole End in appointing it, so I think, with Submission, it ought to be Man's chief End in the Use of it. When we pray, for this End that we may become suitable Objects of God's Care and Love; and when we so pray, as that this End is answer'd upon us; then it is most likely and probable that our Prayers will be accepted in God's Sight.

Thus I have consider'd what are the Ends of Prayer.

Fourthly and lastly, I am to enquire what Prayers will be accepted and answered.

By *accepted*, I mean God's Approbation of them; and by *answer'd*, I mean a giving the Petitioner the Things prayed for. I make a Distinction betwixt these; because there are some Petitions which God accepts and approves, and yet he does not grant the Thing prayed for; and there are others, which God grants, or gives the Petitioner the Thing prayed for,
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and yet does not accept or approve of the Petition.

First, What Prayer will be accepted. Here I observe, that the Ground or Reason of God's approving or disapproving of any Action, is the State and Condition of the Action it self, and not the State and Condition of the Person that performs it, antecedent to that Performance. For if a good Man performs a bad Action; as the *Nature of the Action* is not changed by the State of the Person which perform'd it, that is, a bad Action does not become good by it's being perform'd by a good Man; so *God's Disposition* (which is the Holiness and Rectitude of his Nature) to disapprove bad Actions, is not changed by the bad Actions being done by a good Man; For tho' probably the State and Condition of a good Man may the better dispose him for God's Mercy upon his Repentance when he is become guilty of a bad Action, yet God disapproves of that Act equally as much as if it had been committed by a Man whose State and Condition was bad antecedent to that Action. Thus *David* was a good Man, a Man, after God's own Heart; a Man so highly favour'd of God, that he shewed Kindness to *David's* Posterity for his Servant *David's* Sake. But when *David* did Evil in the Sight of the Lord, as in the Case of *Uriah the Hittite*; all his Goodness did not Change the Nature of his bad Acts, nor yet change God's Disposition to disapprove them. They were as bad, and God disapproved them as much, in *David*, as in any other Man. So on the other Side, if a bad Man performs a good Action; as the State of the Person does not change the Nature of that Action, so neither does it, nor can it, change God's Disposition (which is the Holiness and Rectitude of his Nature, as I said before,) to approve that Action; because God always approves that which is the proper Object of his Approbation,

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bation, as all good Actions are, let them be perform'd by good or bad Men. Thus *Ahab* was a very bad Man, a Man that sold himself to work Wickedness in the Sight of the Lord; and yet when he perform'd a good Action, as in the Case when he humbled himself before the Lord, at the divine Threat, all his Wickedness did not make this good Action bad, neither did it change God's Disposition to approve it; for as his Action was good in it self, so God approv'd it even in wicked *Ahab*, and averted the Evil threatned for its Sake, 1 *King.* 21, 29.

Now the Reason of all this, is evident. For as God's approving or disapproving of Actions, is not founded upon an arbitrary Will in God, but upon the Holiness and Rectitude of his Nature; whence he is naturally disposed to approve and disapprove Things, as they are the proper and suitable Objects of his Approbation or Dislike; so the State and Condition of Men's Actions for Good or Evil, is not founded upon the State and Condition of their Persons; but on the contrary, the State of their Persons for either of these, is wholly founded upon the State and Condition of their Actions: So that a good Action, is not Good because it is done by a good Man, but, on the contrary, a good Man is a good Man, because he performs good Actions: And a bad Action, is not bad because it is perform'd by a Bad Man; but on the contrary, a Bad Man is a Bad Man, because he performs bad Actions. Men likewise are good or bad to that Degree, as their Actions are so. If a good Man performs a bad Action, he is in that Action a bad Man; and if a bad Man performs a good Action, he is in that Particular a good Man: tho' Men are denominated bad or good, not from a particular, but from the generality of their Actions.

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This being observed ; I say, that when Men put up such Petitions to God, as are good and lawful in themselves ; and when they do it seriously, and with such Earnestness as is suitable to the Value and Importance of the Things prayed for ; and when they do it for the good and lawful Ends before mention'd, with a willing Mind to do all that is necessary on their Part toward the attaining the Things prayed for, (as, when we pray that God will give us Day by Day our daily Bread, we have a willing Mind to use our honest daily Endeavour for its Attainment,) with a Desire to be heard upon the Account and for the Sake of Christ Jesus our Lord ; and with a modest Resignation to God's Will, in all those Cases wherein we are uncertain that the Things prayed for are fit for God to give, or for us to receive ; and more especially, when we so pray as that God's End in appointing this Duty is answered upon us : I say, When our Petitions are thus qualified ; as they are good and commendable in themselves, so we need not doubt but God will accept and approve them. For tho' we may thro' Ignorance petition for such Things as God may not think fit to give us, yet if those Petitions are qualified as aforesaid, God will accept them, tho' he does not answer them : But tho' Reason assures us that God will accept of such Prayers, as are thus qualified ; and tho' such Performances (commonly call'd Prayers) which are wholly destitute of these Qualifications, God will not accept ; yet how far, or what degree of Defect in these, or either of these, will hinder that Acceptance, is a Question which I will not presume to answer. Thus, supposing a Man should put up a Petition to God, duly qualified in all Respects, save this, (*viz.*) that the Earnestness of the Desire did not bear a Proportion to the Worth and Value of the Benefit pray'd for ; Tho' we can be assured that this Prayer would be accepted, if it had this Qualification ;

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lification ; yet we can have no Assurance, that a Defect in this Particular will hinder that Acceptance. God perfectly knows all the Temptations, Weaknesses and Disadvantages which his Creatures lie under, for the Performance of any Duty ; and as he will take all these into the Account, so where he sees Men in the main sincere and honest in their Performances, His Goodness may dispose him to overlook many Imperfections which may be in their Duty ; and so he may approve of the Duty in general, tho' he does not approve of the Defects of it.

Secondly ; What Prayers will be answer'd. And here we must observe, that God answers Men's Petitions either in Displeasure, or in Kindness : In Displeasure, when their Sins provoke him to give them their Petitions to their Hurt ; or in Kindness, when their Conduct disposes him to answer their Petitions for their Good. I shall consider it, only with Respect to the latter ; and accordingly I say, that as God appointed the Duty of Prayer, not for his own Sake, but for the Good and Benefit of the Petitioner ; and as God sees thro' and to the End of all Things, and consequently must know what is most for the Good and Benefit of his Creatures at all Times :] So when our Petitions are so qualified, as to render them acceptable in God's Sight ; and when God sees that the giving them to us will be more for our Good, than the withholding them from us, I say, such Petitions God will answer, at the most proper Time, and in the most proper Measure ; except our after-Conduct shall render us unworthy of them.

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APPENDIX.

*Being an Enquiry into the Sense and
Meaning of our Lord's Words;
Son, thy Sins be forgiven thee,
Mar. 2, 5.*

FOR the right understanding of these Words, it is necessary to observe, that as Sin is a Transgression of God's Law, so God is pleased to manifest his Dislike of Sin by punishing the Transgressors of that Law: which Punishment is two-fold; either first, by inflicting upon them temporary Afflictions and Death in this World; or secondly, by punishing them with everlasting Death in the World to come. Thus we read, *Acts. 12, 23, That Herod for his Impiety was smitten with a Sore Disease; that he was eaten of Worms and died.* And St. Paul informs us, That the *Corinthians*, for their Abuse of the Lord's Supper, (an Ordinance instituted to perpetuate the Memory of Christ's Death to all Posterity, and to awaken and keep alive in the Minds of Christians an affecting Sense of Christ's Love in laying down his precious Life in their Cause and for their Sakes. I say, for the Abuse of this Ordinance) *some of them were sickly and weak, and some were fallen asleep (or dead,)* 1 Cor. 11, 30. So again, we read, *Luk. 16. 22,*

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22, *That the rich Man also died, and in Hell he lift up his Eyes being in Torment.* And ver. 25, *Abraham said unto Him, Son, remember that thou in thy Life Time receivedst thy good Things, and Lazarus evil Things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* And Christ is represented, in *Matt. 25, 41*, as saying to the Wicked at the Day of Judgment, *Go ye cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, &c.* From all which, it plainly appears, that God punishes some Men for their Sins in this World, and some in the World to come; and perhaps some Sinners he punishes in both.

And as God is pleased to manifest his Dislike of Sin, by punishing the Transgressors, as aforesaid; so he is pleas'd upon proper Occasions, to manifest his Mercy in forgiving the Offender; which Forgiveness consists in the remitting or taking away those Punishments, which are either inflicted upon or threatened to the Sinner: And accordingly Forgiveness is likewise two-fold, as it relates to the two Kinds of Punishment to be remitted or taken away (*viz.*) Temporary Punishments in this World, and everlasting Punishments in the World to come. Thus we read, That because *Abah* humbled himself before the Lord, the Lord remitted to him the temporal Punishment which he had threatned upon *Abah* and his House, and would not bring the *Evil in his Days.* 1 *Kings* 21, 29. Likewise God was pleased to remit the temporary Punishment threatned against the People of *Nineveh*; because they repented at the preaching of *Jonah*, *ch. 2. 10.* Thus again we read, That *St. Paul* was a great Offender, in that he persecuted the Church of God, and compelled Christians to blaspheme, *Acts. 26, 11*; And yet he declares for himself, That there was laid up for him a Crown of Righteousness (in another World) which the Lord, the righteous Judge, should give him at the Day of Judgment, 2 *Tim.* 4, 8; and consequently that the everlasting Punish-

ment in another World, threatned was which and due for his Sins, should be remitted unto him. Our Lord likewise declares, That those which did *blaspheme the Holy Ghost, should not be forgiven, neither in this World, neither in the World to come, Matt. 12, 32.* From all which, it manifestly appears, that Forgiveness of Sin is two-fold; *first*, in remitting or taking away the temporary Punishment inflicted upon, and threatned to Men, in this World, for their Sins; and *secondly*, in remitting the everlasting Punishments threatned to the Sinner in the World to come,

The Case of Forgiveness being thus stated; the Question is, when our Lord said, *Son, thy Sins be forgiven thee*, whether he meant the removing of a temporary Punishment in this World, or the remitting of everlasting Punishment in the World to come. Now tho' the Words themselves do not determine this Matter to either Side of the Question; yet if we take in the whole Story, we shall find it clearly determin'd to the former. For,

First, this Forgiveness was vouchsafed to the Man, not only upon the Account of his own Faith, but also upon the Account of the Faith of them that brought him. *And Jesus seeing [their] Faith, &c.* That is, Jesus seeing that the Persons, which brought the Sick Man, were strongly perswaded that he was both able and willing to heal him, (which strong Perswasion was evident by their opening the Roof of the House, and letting the Man down thro' the Tyling,) *he said to the Sick Man, Son, thy Sins be forgiven thee*, Now as on the one Side, when we consider the Terms proposed in the Gospel for the remitting of everlasting Punishment, it is very unlikely and unreasonable to suppose, that the Man was discharged from that Punishment upon the Account of other Men's Faith: So on the other side it is very likely and rational to suppose,

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suppose, that the Man was deliver'd from temporary Punishment, that is, was cured of the Palsie, upon the Account of the Faith of those that brought him; because, as this was an answering the End of their Faith and Practice, so it was a proper and suitable Means to corroborate and strengthen their Faith in Christ. But this will be farther evident, if we consider,

Secondly, Our Lord's Question to the *Jews*, upon their supposing him to be guilty of Blasphemy. Saith he, *Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the Palsie, Thy Sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy Bed, and walk?* Our Saviour in the exercise of his Ministry, cured all sorts of bodily Diseases; and in so doing, he had given an abundant Proof of his Power or Ability to forgive or deliver Men from the temporary Punishments they lay under for their Sins. Now notwithstanding this, the *Jews* who catch'd at every Occasion of defaming him, were so unreasonable as to think him to be guilty of Blasphemy, because he said, *Son, thy Sins be forgiven thee.* Upon which, our Lord, replied to their Reasoning; *Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the Palsie, Thy Sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy Bed, and walk?* As much as if he had said; Which is easier? to cure the Man, of his Disease; or to give a sensible Demonstration of the Truth of that Cure? *But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath Power on Earth to work such a Cure, he saith to the sick of the Palsie, (that is, to the Man which had been sick, and was just then healed,) Arise, and take up thy Bed, and go thy way into thine House.* The Man's rising, and carrying his Bed was a sensible Proof of his being cured of his Disease, or of his being forgiven or deliver'd from the temporary Punishment he lay under for his Sin; and consequently of Christ's being possess'd with a Power to exercise

exercise that Forgiveness. But this Act of his, in rising and carrying his Bed, was not such a sensible Proof of the Forgiveness of his Sins, with respect to everlasting Punishment in another World; and consequently, That kind of Forgiveness was not intended by our Saviour.

Upon the whole, I think it very manifest, that when our Lord said to the Man sick of the Palsie, *Son, thy Sins be forgiven thee*; he meant by it, that he was discharged from the temporary Punishment, (*viz.* the Palsie,) which he lay under for his Sins; and consequently that the Man was actually cured upon the pronouncing of these Words, tho' he did not rise from his Bed till our Lord required him so to do, to give a sensible Proof to the standers by, of the Truth of that Cure, and of his Ability and Power to effect it.

This Point is farther illustrated by St. James, *Jam.* 5, 14, *Is any sick among you? let him call for the Elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with Oyl in the Name of the Lord. Ver. 15, And the Prayer of Faith shall save the Sick; that is, it shall be effectual for his Recovery from that temporary Affliction which he lies under. And the Lord shall raise him up; (viz.) from that Bed of sickness upon which he is laid down. And if he have committed Sins; that is, if he have committed such Sin for which this Affliction is laid upon him as a Punishment; they shall be forgiven him.* That this is the Meaning of St. James, is evident from the Supposition, [If he have committed Sins.] St James tells us, *Chap. 3, 2, That in many things we offend All: Therefore All have committed Sin; as well the Sick, as the Whole, in his Account.* Consequently there was no room for him to put this Supposition, [If he have committed Sins,] with respect to Sins in general; because all Men have done so. And therefore the Sense of it, is plainly this; If he have committed such

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Sins for for which this Affliction is laid upon him as a Punishment in this World, they shall be forgiven him; that is, his Affliction, or the temporary Punishment which he lies under for them, shall be removed. To remit everlasting Punishment to one Man, meerly upon the account of the Prayer and Faith of another Man; is to disregard those Terms upon which that Forgiveness is proposed in the Gospel; which are the Faith, Penitence, and Obedience of the Person forgiven. And therefore by forgiving his Sins, it is reasonable to suppose, that St. James intends the delivering him from the temporary Punishment, or Affliction he lies under for them. And that this is his Meaning, is farther evident by what follows, *Ver. 16, Confess your Faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed; that is, that ye may be deliver'd from those Afflictions which are laid upon you for those Faults. The effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man, availeth much; that is, it availeth much toward the healing of those that are afflicted as aforesaid. Ver. 17, Elias was a Man subject to like Passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three Years and six Months. Ver. 18, And he prayed again, and the heaven gave Rain, and the Earth brought forth her Fruit.* Here we see what it was that Elias's Prayer was effectual for; not the inflicting or removing of everlasting Punishment in the World to come; but for the inflicting and removing of temporary Punishment here in this World: *He prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not by the space of three Years and six Months; This was a temporary Punishment, laid upon the House of Israel for their Sins: And he prayed again, and the heaven gave Rain, and the earth brought forth her Fruit.* This was Forgiveness of Sin in this World, or a removing the temporary Punishment which the Israelites in this World suffer'd for their Sins.

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ENQUIRY

INTO THE

Meaning of our Lord's Words,

*Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall
die in your Sins, Joh. 8, 24.*

BY the Term *Sin*, I understand the doing any thing, with the Body or Mind, which the Light of Reason, or Divine Revelation makes a Crime: Or the omitting to do that, which the Light of Reason or Divine Revelation makes a Duty.

By *dying in Sin*, I understand the Dying under the Guilt of Sin, and under the Sentence of that Law which condemned it, without any Share or Fellowship in the pardoning Mercy of God in Christ Jesus.

By the Term *Believe*, I understand the Act of the Mind, which assents to the Truth of any Proposition reveal'd or testified by another, upon Rational grounds.

As to the Term, *I*, in these words, *Except ye believe that I am He*, I understand it to signify That Divine Person, which the four Evangelists have given us the
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History of his Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension: That Divine Person, which was conceived and born of the Virgin, by the Power of the Holy Ghost, that was born in *Bethlehem*; that was brought up in *Galilee*; that was baptiz'd of *John*, in *Jordan*; that went up and down in *Judea*, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and wrought a Multitude of uncontrollable Miracles to confirm the Truth of his Mission. This Divine Person being at *Jerusalem*, and in the Temple conferring with the *Jews*, at the time when these Words of the Text were spoken: He, (*viz.*) That Human Body which was visible to the Sight and Feeling of the *Jews* then and there present; and That intellectual rational Spirit which was united to, and animated that Body, and which influenced and moved that Tongue which talked with them: He, and He only was intended by the term *I*. I say, This Divine Person, and he only: Not That God and Father which was with him, and by whose Authority and Power he did and taught these things. *Joh. 5, 30, I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge, and my Judgment is just, because I seek not mine own Will, but the Will of the Father which hath sent me.* *Act. 2. 22, Ye Men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you, by Miracles, Wonders, and Signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye your selves also know.* *Ver. 36, Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* *Chap. 10, 38, God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with Power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil, for God was with him.* *Heb. 1. 1, 2, God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things,*
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by whom also he made the Worlds. I say, Not this God and Father, but That Divine Person which this God and Father commision'd, and sent forth, and enabled as aforesaid, was He and He only which is intended by the term *I*.

As to the term *He*, [Except ye believe that I am *He*,] it was This Term, the right understanding of which, was of so great concernment to the *Jews*, and perhaps to all to whom Christ is reveal'd : I say, The right understanding of this term *He*, was of great Consequence to them ; because if they did not understand who he was, they could not give their Assent or believe who he was ; and therefore a true Answer to the *Jews* Question, *Who art Thou ?* seems to be highly necessary to the Christian World. The *Jews*, we find, were of various Opinions who this Divine Person was. *Herod* said, It is *John the Baptist* risen from the Dead. Some said, That he was *Elias*. Others, that he was *Jeremias*. Others, that he was one of the Old Prophets, risen again. Some said, That he was a Good Man. Others said, That he had a Devil. Some said, That he was a Deceiver. Others said, That he was the Christ. And as the *Jews* were thus divided in their Opinions who this Divine Person was ; so have Christian People been alike divided in their Opinions concerning him : Some saying one thing, and some another. Now amidst these diversities of Opinions it may not be amiss to enquire what this Divine Person hath said concerning himself in this Matter ; because he expressly told the *Jews*, That what he had said of himself, was what he intended by the Term *He*, ver. 25. Now if we consult the History of our Lord's Life, from which alone we can have Satisfaction in the present Case, we shall there find *what* he hath said of himself, *Who* he hath declared himself to be, and *what* he did require that others should believe concerning him.

him. *Joh. 4: 25, 26, The Woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: When he is come, he will shew us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee, am He. Chap. 9; 35—38, Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? and he answer'd and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is He that talketh with Thee. Chap. 10, 36, Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the World, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God? Chap. 17, 3, This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Matt. 26; 63, 64, The High Priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell me, whether thou be the Christ the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: Or, as St. Mark expresses it, Chap. 14; 61, 62, The high Priest asked him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? and Jesus said, I am. Here we see plainly what this Divine Person hath said of himself, who he hath declared himself to be, and what he hath required of others to believe concerning him, (*viz.*) That he is the Messiah or Christ, that he is the only-begotten Son of God, that his God and Father hath sanctified and sent him to be the Lord and Saviour of the World. This then appears evidently to be the meaning of the Term *He*; because when the *Jews* put the Question to him, *Who art Thou?* his Answer was, *Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.**

So then the meaning of the whole Sentence appears to be this; (*viz.*) If you do not give your Assent to this Truth (upon that Rational Evidence which hath been afforded for your Conviction,) that I am the Messiah or Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; and that my God and Father hath sanctified and sent me to be the Saviour of Mankind, ye shall die un-

der the Guilt of your Sins, without any Share or Fellowship in the Mercy of God, which is now graciously offer'd to Mankind. And on the other side, if you do believe and confess that I am the Messiah or Christ, the Son of God, the Sent of God, the Anointed Lord and Saviour of Mankind, and do shew your selves faithful to me your Lord and Saviour to the Death; you shall be saved.

And as this appears to be the Sense and Meaning of our Lord in this Matter, so it is also farther confirmed by a Cloud of Witnesses, who have given their Testimony concerning it. Thus the Supreme God the Father hath born Witness concerning him, *Matt. 2. 17. Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Chap. 17, 5. Behold, a voice out of the Cloud which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleas'd; hear ye him.* And this Testimony of the Father, is rehearsed by *St. Peter, 2 Pt. 1; 17, 18, He received from God the Father Honour and Glory, when there came such a Voice to him from the excellent Glory, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased: And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the Ho'y Mount.* The holy Angels have also given Their Testimony, *Matt. 1; 20, 21, Behold, the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a Dream, saying, Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy Wife; for she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his Name Jesus, for he shall save his People from their Sins. Luke 1, 32, He shall be great, and shall be called The Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David. Ver. 35, That holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called, The Son of God. Chap. 2; 10, 11, The Angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good Tidings of great Joy, which shall be to all People; for unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. John Baptist hath*

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hath likewise witnessed to this Truth, *Joh. 1, 29, The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of the World. Ver. 34, I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God. Nathanael hath given us a Confession of his Faith in this matter, Joh. 1, 49, Nathanael saith unto him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel. Martha the Sister of Lazarus, hath likewise made a Confession of her Faith in this Matter, Joh. 11, 27, Martha said unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ the Son of God that should come into the World. St. Mark hath given us a Confession of his Faith, with which he begins his Gospel, Chap. 1, 1, The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. St. Peter hath given his Testimony, Act. 2, 36, Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. The Church at Jerusalem hath likewise given us their Testimony, in their Prayer, Act. 4; 26, 27, 30, The Kings of the earth stood up, and the Rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ; for of a truth against thy Holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed; — And that Signs and Wonders may be done by the Name of thy Holy Child Jesus. St. Peter hath likewise confessed, in behalf of himself and the rest of the Disciples, Matt. 16; 15, 16, He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? and Peter answer'd and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God: And that This was a true Confession, Christ hath himself shewed by pronouncing Peter Blessed upon the account of it, and by declaring that he had received this Faith from his heavenly Father, Ver. 17, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not reveal'd it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven. Joh. 6; 68, 69, Simon Peter answer'd, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life;*

Life; And we believe, and are sure, that thou art the Christ the Son of God. St. Luke hath also given us an account of the Eunuch's Faith in this matter, which Philip accepted as a true Christian Faith, and baptized him thereupon; *Acts 8, 37, Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest (be baptiz'd;)* *And he answer'd and said, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, Ver. 38; and he baptiz'd him.* St. Paul hath likewise given us his Sense of these Matters, *Rom. 1; 1, 2, 3,* where he shews that God hath fulfilled his Promise made in the Scriptures concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Chap. 10; 8, 9, 10, This is the Word of Faith which we preach, That if thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy Heart that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness, and with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation.* St. John the Apostle hath likewise fully express'd himself in this matter, *1 Joh. 4, 15, Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. Chap. 5, 1, Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. Ver. 5, Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* Finally, St. John informs us, that the very End and Design of his writing and publishing his Gospel, was to beget this Perswasion in us, that *Jesus is the Christ the Son of the Living God; and that believing this, we might have Life thro' his Name, Joh. 20, 31.*

Thus we see what is the true Christian Faith, with relation to the Person of our Saviour, as it is fully and largely set forth in the Scriptures, which are our only faithful Guide in this matter. Here we see, that it is not the *Nature* or *Essence* of our Saviour, which is the Object of our Christian Faith; but it is a believing that the Divine Person whose History is contain'd in the four Gospels; that this heavenly
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Person is the Messiah or Christ ; that he is the only-begotten Son of God, the Sent of God, the anointed Lord and Saviour of Mankind ; and consequently that the good Tidings are true, which he is the Messenger of ; and whatsoever he hath reveal'd, is the infallible Word of God. And we farther see, that whosoever believes in, and submits to him as such, accepting his gracious Offer, and shews himself faithful to him to the Death, is a true Christian, whom Christ will own and approve, when he shall come to judge both Quick and Dead.

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ENQUIRY

Into that important Question, Whether Christ is sole King in his own Kingdom; or, Whether the Civil Magistrates, or the Pastors in Christ's Church, are invested with Authority to rule Christ's Subjects, by making Laws to direct their Behaviour and Conduct in Christ's Service; which Laws, they (viz. Christ's Subjects) are obliged in Conscience to pay active Obedience to.

In a LETTER to a Gentleman.

SIR,

THE State of Christianity at this Time, in this Part of the World, is very remarkable: For as Christians are here divided into two more general Parts, (*viz.*) Papists and Protestants so
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some of these, seem to change Hands: Some Protestants seemingly avowing those Principles, upon which Popery is founded; and some Papists, seemingly asserting those which are the Foundation of Protestantism. This seems evident, from what has been objected to, and offer'd against, the Bishop of *Bangor's* Sermon lately preached before the King; and from that noble Speech made by the Representative of the *Sorbonne* in *France*, when, in their Name, he presented their Book to the Earl of *Stairs*. What will be the Event, is not easy to foresee.

The present Debate among us seems to be, *Whether Christ is Sole King in his own Kingdom; or, Whether the Civil Magistrates, or the Pastor's in Christ's Church, are invested with Authority to rule Christ's Subjects, by making Laws to direct their Behaviour and Conduct in Christ's Service; which Laws, they (viz. Christ's Subjects) are obliged in Conscience to pay active Obedience to.* This Question seems to be of great Importance; For if Christ is sole King in his own Kingdom, then Christians have no other Laws but those of Christ, for the directing of their Behaviour and Conduct in his Service, which they are in Duty bound to pay active Obedience to: But if the Civil Magistrates, or the Pastors in Christ's Church, are invested with Authority to rule Christ's Subjects, by making Laws to direct their Behaviour, in Christ's Service, then the Freedom of the Gospel may be a much greater Bondage than the Bondage of the Mosaick Law, if those who are invested with such Authority are disposed to make it so. And as this Question is of great Importance; so Christians, even Protestants, seem to be very much divided in their Opinions concerning it.

This being the Case, Sir, I presume you will not take it amiss if I make one or two Observations

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relating to this Question, and submit them to your Consideration and Judgment. I observe

I. As Magistracy, or the Exercise of a regular Government, in human Society, is the Ordinance of God; and as the great and main End of Government, is the Good and Happiness of the Society in which it is exercised; and as Magistrates are the Guardians of human Society, by being a Security to every one's Property, and keeping every one in the quiet Possession of his own; and as they can have no Right to invade that which the Nature and End of their Office obliges them to secure: So their Authority or Right to command, can extend no farther, than to those Things wherein the Advantage or Disadvantage of human Society is concern'd; the Happiness and Well-being of that Society being their only and peculiar Province: And consequently, if they should at any Time take upon them to command, or forbid, that which no Way concerns the Interest of human Society, and should add Sanctions to such Laws; as this would be acting out of their Sphere, and doing that which they had no Right or Authority to do; so consequently their People would not be obliged in Conscience to pay active Obedience to such Laws, any otherways than as when two natural Evils present themselves, so that one or other of them must of Necessity be submitted to, it is our Duty to chuse the less.

The Truth of this Observation will more plainly appear, when I have premised, that as Magistrates are the Guardians of human Society, so their Authority is annexed to, and founded on, and confined to that Relation. King George had no Authority over the People of *Great Britain*, till he became the King or Guardian of that People; and consequently his Authority in *Great Britain* is annexed to, and founded on, the Relation in which he stands

stands to the People of this Nation. And as the Authority of Magistrates is annexed to, and founded on, such their Relation; so it is wholly confined to it. King *George* hath no Authority out of his Dominions, over the Subjects of another Prince. And the Reason of this, is evident; because he does not stand in the Relation of a Guardian to them; and consequently his Authority is wholly confined to his Relation.

This being premised, I lay down the two following Propositions.

1. That the Ground of our Obligation to Obedience, is wholly founded on the Authority or Right of commanding in the Law-giver. And
2. That the Province or Relation of the Governour, is the Rule or Measure of his Authority, both with Respect to Persons and Things.

1st. The Ground of our Obligation to Obedience, is wholly founded on the Authority or Right of commanding in the Lawgiver. Hath God commanded us to obey others? That Obedience can be due only to such Persons, and in such Things, as they by Virtue of their Relation are invested with Authority to command; seeing God hath not commanded us, (either in his written Word, or from the Nature and Reason of Things,) to obey any particular Command, or any particular Person commanding, consider'd distinct from his Relation. And as the Authority of the Magistrate is founded on, and confined to, his Relation; so our Obligation to Obedience, must be founded on, and confined to, his Authority: And consequently where there is no Authority to command, there can be no Obligation to obey, either with Respect to Persons or Things. Besides,

If the Ground of our Obligation to Obedience, consider'd as Obedience, be any Thing besides the Authority of the Lawgiver, (which properly speaking is the Authority of God, because it is he that gives that Authority to command, and requires Obedience to it, by requiring every Thing to be done which the Nature and Reason of Things makes necessary;) then we are utterly at a loss to know whom we ought to obey, and whom not: And consequently for ought I know, I may be obliged in Conscience to obey every one that shall take a Liberty to command me, whether he hath Authority over me or not: But this is too great an Absurdity to be true.

2dly. The Province or Relation of the Governour, is the Rule or Measure of his Authority, both with Respect to Persons and Things. For, as Authority admits of Degrees, both with Respect to Persons and Things; one Man having a greater Authority with Respect to Things, and more extensive with Respect to Persons, than another: As the King of *Great Britain* hath a greater and more extensive Authority, than the Lord Mayor of *London*: So this Difference is wholly founded in the different Relations, in which they stand to those they have That Authority over; For otherways, every Petty-Constable would have as much Authority as the King. Every Petty-Constable hath a Measure of Authority: But that Authority, as it is founded on, so it is confined to, his Relation; and when his Relation ceases, his Authority ceases with it. And if he should assume a Power beyond his Relation, either with Respect to Persons or Things; as this would be an acting out of his Province, and a doing that which he hath no Authority to do; so the Persons to whom that Power was directed, would not be obliged in Conscience to pay active Obedience to it. The Case is the same with Respect to all Governours; For as their Authority is annexed to, and founded in their Relation; so

so it is wholly confined to it, both with Respect to Persons and Things. And as all Magistrates are the Guardians of humane Society, some in a greater, and some in a lesser Degree; so their Authority can extend only to such Things wherein the Good or Hurt, the Safety or Danger, of that Society doth consist, for as this is their only and peculiar Province, so their Authority is confined to it, and cannot be extended to those Things which are foreign to that Relation. Besides,

If the Province or Relation, in which Governours are placed, is not the Rule and Measure of their Authority; then we are utterly at a loss to know in what Cases we are obliged in Conscience to pay active Obedience to their Commands, and in what not: And consequently, for ought I know, it may be my Duty to obey every Command which is laid upon me by my Governours, tho' they command me to practise the greatest Sin; because wheresoever, and in whatsoever, there is Authority to command, there must be an Obligation to obey: But this likewise is too absurd to be true.

If it should be here replied, That it is our Duty to obey all the Commands of our Governours, except those which contradict the Commands of God; and that in such Cases our Obligation to obey our Governours ceases, because we are under a superior Obligation, and consequently cannot be obliged to practise any Thing that is sinful, tho' our Governours should lay such Commands upon us:

I answer; The Authority of the Magistrate is the Authority of God, because it is originally derived from him; and consequently there can be no Authority superior to it. And therefore if in these Cases the Magistrate hath any Authority to command, we are under an Obligation to obey; Because our Obligation to Obedience, is founded on that Authority; and consequently must be as extensive and
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universal, as that Authority upon which it is founded: And such Commands, in this Case, would not contradict, but supersede or make void the Commands of God; like as the Gospel of Christ did not contradict, but supersede or make void the Mosaick Law. But the Magistrates Commands do not supersede or make void the Commands of God: Consequently our Non-obligation to Obedience, in such Cases, is not founded upon our Obligation to a superior Authority, (there being in Fact no such Thing,) but only upon the Magistrates laying such Commands upon us as they have no Authority to do.

From the foregoing Observation, I infer,

First, that the Principle so often laid down, (*viz.*) That it is the Duty of Subjects to pay active Obedience to all the Commands of their Governours, except those which run counter to the Commands of God, is an erroneous Principle: For if our Obligation to Obedience, be founded in the Authority or Right of commanding in the Lawgiver; and if the Rule or Measure of Governours Authority, be the Relation in which they stand; and if Governours are the Guardians of human Society, by securing every one's Property, and keeping every one in the quiet Possession of their own; and if this is their only and peculiar Province: from hence it will unavoidably follow, that if Governours command or forbid that wherein the Advantage or Disadvantage of human Society is not at all concern'd; as this is an acting out of their Province, and doing what they have no Authority to do; so their Subjects can be under no Obligation to pay active Obedience to such Commands, whether those Commands run counter to the Commands of God or not. I infer,

Secondly; That if the Civil Magistrates, as such, should take upon them to rule Christ's Subjects, by making Laws to direct their Behaviour and Conduct

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in Christ's Service; as this would not be only an acting out of their own Province, by doing that which they have no Authority to do, but also taking upon them to govern the Servants of another Master; so the Subjects of Christ's Kingdom would be under no Obligation, (any other than that prudential One before-mentioned of choosing the lesser Evil,) to pay active Obedience to such Laws; because where there is no Authority to command, there can be no Obligation to obey. I observe,

II. That as the Body of Christians have but one common Head, (*viz.*) Christ Jesus; so all the Members of that Body, as such, stand upon a Level in point of Authority; all of them being Brethren in the same Family, Fellow-Members of the same Body, and Fellow-Servants to the same Master. And Christ, the Lord and Head of this House, hath been so far from taking in any of the Members of this Family to be Sharers with himself in the Government of it, or from giving a Right of Dominion to one Member over another, in his Kingdom; that on the contrary, he hath strictly forbid any such Authority to be exercised in his Church; *Luke 23; 25, 26, The Kings of the Gentiles exercise Lordship over them, and they that exercise Authority upon them, are called Benefactors; but ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the Younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.* Christians, consider'd as Men, united in human Society, may be invested with civil Authority, or with Authority in civil Things, for the Good and Benefit of such Societies: But Christians, consider'd as Christians, or as Members of the Body of Christ, can have no Authority, properly so called, over one another, in religious Things, or in Things relating to Christianity: And consequently, where there is no Authority to command, there can be no Obligation to Obedience,

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As to the *Pastors* in Christ's Church, they stand in the Relation of Ministers or Servants, and not in the Relation of Masters or Governours to Christ's People; and consequently there is no Authority lodg'd in them, from that Relation, to rule Christ's Subjects, by making Laws to direct their Behaviour and Conduct in Christ's Service: And therefore if they should at any Time take upon them to make *Laws*, as aforesaid, Christ's People are not obliged in *Conscience* to pay active Obedience to them; because where there is no Authority to command, there can be no Obligation to Obedience, as I observed before.

If it should be here objected, *first*, That the Pastors in Christ's Church have an Authority over the People committed to their Care, and that their People are bound in Conscience to yield Obedience to such Laws, as they by Vertue of that Authority, have a Right to lay upon them; according to the Testimony of St. Paul, *Heb. 13, 17, Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves; for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give an Account; that they may do it with Joy, and not with Grief, &c.*

I answer; It is a piece of *Justice* due to the Apostle, to interpret his Words in such a Sense, as is agreeable with, and not contradictory to, the Precepts of Christ. And therefore when he charged the believing *Hebrews*, *To obey them that had the Rule over them, and to submit themselves*; he cannot in Reason be supposed to intend any more than this, (*viz.*) that they should submit to, and follow the Instructions and Admonitions of their Pastors, in all those Things which they, from the Gospel, should make appear to be their Duty: That they should obey, not the Commands of their Pastors, but the Commands of Christ, which these Pastors, according to their Office, acquainted them with, and pressed upon them. As to the Term *Ruler*, (as it is expressed

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sed in our Translation,) which in this, and other Places of the New Testament, is applied to the Pastors in Christ's Church; the Bishop of *Bangor* hath shewn, that the Word in the Original doth not signify a *Ruler* in the most proper Sense, which implies a *Law-giver*, but only a *Teacher* or *Guide*; as may be seen in his Answer to the Representation of the Committee of the Lower House of Convocation, Pag. 60, 61.

If it should be objected, *Secondly*, that all Things ought to be done decently and in order, in the Assembly of the Saints; and that therefore the Pastors in Christ's Church must be invested with Authority to make such Laws as are necessary thereto, and the People must be obliged in Conscience to pay active Obedience to them; because Decency and Order cannot otherways be provided for; and consequently, without such an Authority, the Church of Christ would be no other but a *Babel* of Confusion.

I answer; That all Things ought to be done decently and in Order, and to Edification in the Assemblies of the Saints, I readily grant: But that this cannot otherways be provided for, than by the Pastors of Christ's Church] assuming to themselves a Power to *make Laws*, which in Reality they have no Authority to do, This I deny. For as Christ is the sole Head and Governour of his People; and as all his Subjects, as such, stand upon a Level in point of Authority, one Member not having a Right of Dominion over another in his Church; so, where any Thing is necessary to be determin'd with Respect to Order, Decency, and Edification, which Christ hath not determin'd; there every particular *Church*, may and ought to lay down such Rules to themselves, as are necessary thereto, according to St. *Paul's* Direction to the Church at *Corinth*, 1 Cor. 14, 40. And so Decency and Order may be sufficiently provided

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for in the Assemblies of the Saints, without the Pastors of Christ's Church assuming to themselves a *Power*, properly speaking, over their Brethren, which they have no Right to.

Thus, Sir, I have given you my Observations with Relation to the Question before-mention'd. I submit them to your Consideration, and beg leave to subscribe my self,

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Yours, &c.

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LETTER

To Another

GENTLEMAN,

Relating to the foregoing *ENQUIRY*.

WHETHER I have truly stated the Case, with respect to the Grounds of Obedience, and the Measures of Authority, Sir, I submit to your Judgment. And as this is a Case, in which the Happiness and Misery of human Society is very nearly concern'd; so it seems to me to be beneath the Wisdom and Goodness of that God, who hath made this Earth a convenient Habitation for a multitude of Creatures, and hath made a plentiful Provision for their Comfort and Well-being; I say, It seems to be beneath his Wisdom and Goodness, to put the Happiness and Misery of the Bulk of Mankind, into the Hands, and leave it at the Will and Pleasure of a Few of that Species: Which he must have done, if he hath given a *general Commission* to

Governors to make what Laws they please, and made it the Duty of their People to pay active Obedience to all their Commands. Besides;

Such a *general Commission* would not only leave the present Happiness of Human Society at the Mercy of Governours, but also it might be a great Hindrance to our eternal Well-being. For upon Supposition that Governours are invested with Authority to make what Laws they please, and that their People are bound in Conscience to obey them; then it will follow, that the Way to eternal Life is so much the straiter; because our eternal Happiness would as much depend upon our sincere Obedience to all our Governours Commands; as it doth upon our sincere Obedience to all God's Commands; notwithstanding we may be under Powerful Temptations to transgress. For, suppose our Governours should command us to make a Confession of all our secret Sins to the parochial Pastor, every Lord's Day. (I chuse to put this Case, because such an Instance of our Obedience is not contradictory to the Commands of God, he having no where forbid us to make such a Confession;) This would make Confession to the Pastor as necessary to Salvation, as Repentance towards God. And forasmuch as the parochial Pastors are of like Passions with other Men; and some of them are not only capable, but disposed to make as bad Use of such Knowledge, as any other Men; What a strong and powerful Temptation must Men be under, when they have done amiss, (if they have not a great degree of Confidence in their Pastor, that he will not use the Knowledge of their Faults to their Hurt: I say, What a strong and powerful Temptation must Men be under in such a Case,) to adventure the Loss of their Souls in another World, by Concealing their Faults, in order to preserve their Reputation in This World, or prevent any other great Evil, which the Knowledge of their Faults might expose them to?

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They would be tempted to conceal all such Faults from their Pastors, as they had reason to fear he would make use of the Knowledge of them to their Peril. And tho' in this Case Governours cannot be Judges, whether their Laws are obeyed or not; because they cannot discover the Secrets of Men's Hearts, and consequently cannot punish the Transgressors of them: Yet this Defect of Knowledge and Power in them, doth not lessen our Obligation to Obedience. For if they have Authority to command, it must be our Duty to obey, whether they have the Knowledge of, or can punish our Faults, or not. And tho' they cannot punish Men in another World, for transgressing their Laws in this; yet the Case is much the same, with respect to the Transgressor; because if God hath required us to obey all the Commands of our Governours, and if he will punish our Disobedience, (which is here supposed;) then our Punishment is as certain, as if it were in the Governour's hand to inflict it, except our sincere Repentance doth prevent it. But blessed be God, for that he hath not put such a Stumbling-block in the way of our present or future Well-being. For tho' Magistracy is, in a general or natural Sense, the Ordinance of God, because the Nature and Reason of things makes the Use of it necessary to the Support and Well-being of human Society, (as every thing is, which the Nature and Reason of things makes necessary to be done;) yet it is no farther the Ordinance of God, than as it is a proper Means to answer that End; because the natural Use and Necessity of it, (which alone constitutes it a Divine Ordinance,) arises wholly from that Relation, (*viz.*) as it is a proper Means to obtain the aforesaid End. And therefore the most absolute Prince upon Earth, how great and extensive soever his Power may be; yet his Authority or Right to command, as it is the Ordinance of God, can extend only to such things, wherein

wherein the Good or Hurt, the Safety or Danger, of human Society is concern'd. This may perhaps more plainly appear, from an Instance of like kind. Eating and Drinking are the Ordinance of God, in the same Sense as Magistracy is; because the Nature and Reason of things, make the Use of these necessary to the Support and Comfort of our natural Life. Now if a Person should eat or drink, (either for Quantity or Quality,) that which is no way necessary to the Support or Comfort of his Natural Life; such Eating and Drinking, would not be the Ordinance of God, because it would be defective and wanting in that very Point in which the Ordinance of God, in this Case, doth consist; (*viz.*) in being a proper Means to attain the aforesaid End; which is the very and only thing that constitutes it a Divine Ordinance, because its natural Use and Necessity wholly arises from it's Relation as a proper Means to its End. So in like manner, Magistracy is the Ordinance of God; because the Nature and Reason of things makes the Use of it necessary to the Support and Well-being of human Society: But if Magistrates should take upon them to command, or forbid That, wherein the Interest of the Society is not at all concern'd; This would not be the Ordinance of God; because it would be defective and wanting in that very Point, in which the Ordinance of God, in this Case, doth consist; (*viz.*) in being a proper Means to attain the aforesaid End; which is the very and only thing that constitutes it a Divine Ordinance, because its Natural Use and Necessity wholly arises from it's Relation as a proper Means to its End.

To pursue this Argument farther, would exceed the Bounds of a common Letter; and therefore I desist.

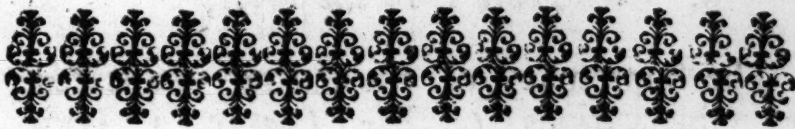
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B O O K S *Written by*
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a Lay-Member of the Church
of England.

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Or, Eight Arguments from Scripture,
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